

AFGHANISTAN 2014: YEAR OF TRANSITION

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AFGHANISTAN 2014: YEAR OF TRANSITION

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 o'clock a.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Edward Royce (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROYCE. This hearing will come to order. We will ask all of the members to take their seats.

I have been focused on Afghanistan since before 9/11, warning of an emerging terrorist sanctuary there in that part of the world. Today, the committee recognizes the tremendous sacrifices made by our troops, made by their families, so that America is safe from the type of attack that Osama bin Laden launched from Afghanistan. Next year, the administration plans to transition from combat operations to an advise and assist role in Afghanistan. And we need a workable and realistic transition plan in place.

Last month, a bipartisan committee delegation led by Representative Adam Kinzinger, and joined by Representatives Scott Perry and Juan Vargas, traveled to Afghanistan and traveled to Pakistan, and these members collected information useful to this committee. So I thank them for their important oversight work. And I also want to recognize the committee's military advisor, Colonel Andrea Thompson, who has served tours in Afghanistan and who organized the trip.

I am concerned that the administration has not adequately defined a mission in Afghanistan. U.S. troop strength will drop to 34,000 in 2 months. And pending a bilateral security agreement, these numbers will drop much lower. The remaining troops will have a limited role, as they should, but what will be our objective? What constitutes success?

Insufficient planning for this transition could put American lives at risk. At present, it is questionable whether our diplomatic facilities are sufficiently equipped, physically and staffing-wise, to protect U.S. personnel. This danger will only increase as more troops withdraw, and transition planners better best figure out how to protect our personnel during this transition.

Unfortunately, endemic corruption in Afghanistan places our aid programs there at constant risk of waste, of fraud, of abuse. And despite years of rule of law training, the Afghan Government has few workable safeguards in place to prevent the misuse of U.S. aid money.

Widespread corruption in Afghanistan also threatens the Presidential and the provincial elections that are set for next April. Free and fair elections are essential, of course, to establishing a stable Afghan Government capable of preventing Taliban-induced chaos. A repeat of the widespread election fraud that we saw in 2009 would almost certainly undermine Afghans' faith in their government, dangerously setting back the country.

Corruption hinders Afghanistan's economy. The country's mining sector could tap deposits of critical industrial metals by attracting more foreign investment, but that won't happen with its off-the-charts corruption in Afghanistan.

On the security front, Pakistan's military and security service continue to complicate matters by supporting the Taliban. Pakistan is a double-dealer, paying lip service to cooperation with the United States, unfortunately while simultaneously undermining our primary objective of bringing Afghanistan under the control of a democratically-elected government.

Lastly, Iran continues to support the Taliban while utilizing Afghanistan's banking system to circumvent U.S. and international sanctions. Iran will intensify its meddling during the transition, at our expense. And just yesterday, it was announced that President Karzai had agreed to a long-term friendship and cooperation pact with Iran. We need to counter this because, as you know, our troops continue to be targeted.

Afghans will determine their future of course, not us. What we can do is help them develop a stable and reasonably democratic government, one respectful of universally recognized human rights. That is what most Afghans want, it is in our interests, and it is what our sacrifices demand we strive for.

I will now turn to Mr. Ted Deutch for any opening statement he might want to make.

MR. DEUTCH. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the panel for being with us today.

We went to Afghanistan with the goal of rooting out al-Qaeda. And we have, with the work and service of our nation's finest and bravest citizens, together with, it bears noting, the service and commitment of 48 of our allies and their bravest citizens.

We have made tremendous gains in decimating al-Qaeda's core infrastructure, but there have also been tremendous gains in women's rights, in access to education, in maternal and child health. But 12 years later we still have 47,000 troops in Afghanistan, with the potential for thousands more to remain for many years.

I am concerned that President Karzai's blustering over whether or not he will sign the bilateral security agreement risks destabilizing Afghanistan by destabilizing the security situation even further, and puts the safety of both U.S. personnel and Afghans in jeopardy.

I hope President Karzai understands that he is risking Afghanistan's future by playing this very dangerous game on the bilateral security agreement. If he is truly committed to a long-term U.S.-Afghan partnership, he should cut the theatrics, including his latest move to negotiate a security pact with Iran, and he should sign the agreement.

The patience of the Congress and the American people is wearing thin. Without a bilateral security agreement, it is possible that Afghanistan will once again become a safe haven for al-Qaeda, a worst-case scenario for the United States, and a legacy that I suspect President Karzai would very much like to avoid.

I know that continuing to achieve strategic gains in Afghanistan is not going to be easy, but I fear that the potential of undoing these gains has far greater consequences for U.S. and for regional security.

I look forward to discussing the path forward with our witnesses today, and I yield back.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. And our Chairman Emeritus, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

As chair of the subcommittee of jurisdiction over Afghanistan, and together with Chairman Chabot and the Asia and Pacific Subcommittee, we held two hearings this year that examined this very issue—the transition in Afghanistan and the way forward for the U.S., Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

I also led a bipartisan congressional delegation to Kabul this past Memorial Day weekend with my wonderful colleagues, Mr. Kennedy and Dr. Bera, and had the honor to meet with our brave men and women who serve our country in Afghanistan, both as armed services and State Department personnel, and they do a tremendous job day in and day out.

While in Afghanistan, we had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Karzai, and you never know what you are going to get. From our conversation, it seemed like then he was pretty optimistic about the final bilateral security agreement, was looking forward to its completion.

Now, however, Karzai is balking at signing the bilateral security agreement, which his grand council endorsed, and as recently as this past weekend lashed out at the U.S. and accused us of threatening him. I am extremely concerned that these latest developments will damage our national security interests in the region, further destabilize the region, and Karzai's flirting with Iran is quite dangerous for our U.S. national security interests. So we remain quite perplexed and concerned.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. This morning we are pleased to be joined by representatives of the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Department of Defense.

Ambassador James Dobbins currently serves as the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Ambassador has held a number of senior positions at the State Department and White House. He was previously the Director of the RAND International Security and Defense Policy Center.

We also have Michael Dumont, currently the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia. Prior to joining the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Dumont served as a Federal prosecutor in the Criminal Division of the U.S.

Department of Justice, and managed the Justice Department programs in Iraq.

Larry Sampler currently serves as the Assistant to the Administrator in the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs. He previously worked at the U.S. Department of State, the Institute for Defense Analysis, and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

And, gentlemen, welcome. Without objection, your full prepared statements will be made part of the record. We are going to ask you each to summarize in 5 minutes your statements. And members here are going to have 5 days to submit statements and questions for the record that you might be asked subsequently to respond to, as well as any extraneous materials that they want to put into the record.

So, Ambassador Dobbins, we will begin with you. Thank you, sir.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JAMES F. DOBBINS, SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Ambassador DOBBINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In my oral remarks, let me concentrate on what I think is probably the most topical and immediately important aspect of our situation in Afghanistan, which is the fate of the bilateral security agreement and the prospects for a longer term American commitment.

As I think you all know, President Karzai called a Loya Jirga, or grand council, to discuss the draft bilateral security agreement, which we and he had concluded. This involved 2,500 of Afghanistan's influential citizens from throughout the country. After 3 days of debate, the Loya Jirga overwhelmingly endorsed the BSA as written and urged President Karzai to sign it before the end of the year. This decision underscores the clear and strong desire of the Afghan people to continue their partnership with the United States and the international community.

The United States agrees with the Afghan people. Signing the BSA will send an important signal to the people of Afghan and to the Taliban, to our allies and partners, and to the region. For the Afghan people, it will reduce anxiety and uncertainty about the future, allowing them to concentrate on the upcoming elections and to invest with confidence in their own economy.

A signed BSA will tell the Taliban, who may think that the end of 2014 means the end of international support, that their only path to peace is by ending violence, breaking ties with al-Qaeda, and accepting the Afghan constitution. A signed BSA will assure the region that the United States will remain engaged and will not abandon Afghanistan, as we once did in 1989 after the Soviet withdrawal.

To our NATO allies and other international partners, a signed BSA will open the door for NATO to begin negotiations of its own status of forces agreement.

For all of these reasons, the administration is committed to expeditious signature of the bilateral security agreement. Delaying signature is in no one's interest. A delay would add another element of uncertainty as Afghanistan prepares for the April 2014 Presidential elections. For the United States and our NATO allies, delay

means a lack of clarity needed to plan for the post-2014 military presence. That, in turn, would jeopardize fulfillment of the pledges of assistance that NATO and other countries made in Chicago and Tokyo in 2012.

As Ambassador Rice made clear during her recent visit to Kabul, although it is not our preference, without a prompt signature we will have no choice but to initiate planning for a 2014 future in which there would be no U.S. or NATO troops.

Let me make clear, however, that plans are not decisions, and assure you that we are not about to decide to abandon all we and the Afghan people have achieved over the past 12 years. Based on the results of the Loya Jirga, expressions of public opinion throughout the country, and discussions during my own visit to Kabul last week, I don't believe that there can be any serious doubt that the Afghan people want American and NATO forces to stay and recognize that the bilateral security agreement is a necessary prerequisite.

The bilateral security agreement is also the keystone of a much wider international commitment involving over seven countries ready to provide economic and security assistance to Afghanistan beyond 2015. Afghanistan's regional neighbors, with the exception of Iran, also understand the importance of the BSA.

I understand, for instance, that President Putin of Russia, President Xi of China, Prime Minister Singh of India, and Prime Minister Sharif of Pakistan have all personally urged President Karzai to conclude the bilateral security agreement. Several of these leaders are no fans of American military presence in Central Asia, but all of them seem to recognize that without a continued international military and economic support Afghanistan risks falling back into civil war, with the attendant rise in extremist groups, outflow of refugees, and disruptions in commerce that would threaten the region as a whole.

Given this coincidence of Afghan public and regional governmental opinion, I see little chance that the bilateral security agreement will not eventually be concluded. Awaiting the arrival of the next Afghan President do so, however, will impose large and unnecessary costs on the American—on the Afghan people. Already the anxiety caused by President Karzai's refusal to heed the advice of the Loya Jirga is having that effect.

While in Kabul last week I learned from the World Bank and other sources that the Afghan currency is slipping in value. Inflation is increasing. Capital is fleeing. Property values are dropping. Perhaps for the first time since 2001, the outflow of population exceeds the return of refugees.

The longer this uncertainty about the future international commitment to Afghanistan continues, the more anxiety among the population will increase, potentially dominating the upcoming Presidential elections, threatening to turn these into a polarizing rather than a unifying experience for the country.

Prolonged uncertainty over the bilateral security agreement will also erode larger international support for Afghanistan. In Tokyo and in Chicago, in 2012, the international community pledged billions of dollars to support the Afghan security forces and the Afghan economy beyond 2014. As in the United States, fulfillment of

these pledges is dependent on public support and parliamentary approval.

Prolonged delay in concluding the bilateral security agreement, and the also required NATO equivalent agreement, can only diminish the prospect that these pledges will be fully met.

In sum, Mr. Chairman, I continue to believe that the bilateral security agreement will ultimately be concluded, but I am seriously dismayed at the cost to the Afghan people that delay—that significant further delay will cause.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Dobbins follows:]

**Testimony of Ambassador James F. Dobbins
Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan
Before the United States House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
December 11, 2013**

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the transition in Afghanistan.

As all of you know, the U.S. role in the latest chapter of Afghanistan's history began on September 11, 2001. Within a month, U.S. forces were in Afghanistan in pursuit of the al-Qaida terrorists who planned the attacks and the regime that had given them sanctuary. That military involvement has now lasted more than a decade and has expanded to a NATO-led international coalition of forty-nine nations. The military campaign has been accompanied by a truly extraordinary international civilian campaign to help heal the scars of decades of war and years of life under a system of government that made the cruel commonplace and to ensure that such a government can never again return, to provide shelter to those who would threaten American citizens, interests, or allies.

From the beginning, we have made clear that our role in Afghanistan and our presence there cannot be open ended. It has always been the aim of U.S. policy to strengthen Afghan institutions so that the Afghan government and people can provide for their own security, grow their own economy, and manage their own internal and external affairs. The President has spoken of these three transitions: security, economic, and political. The underlying element of all three has been a gradual and responsible effort to help Afghans recover from decades of conflict and Taliban rule that damaged or destroyed nearly every institution in the country.

A stable, democratic, and secure Afghanistan is a U.S. national interest; it will be a bulwark against al Qaida and other dangerous extremist groups and a partner in the effort to prevent those groups from using Afghanistan to plan and launch attacks against our people and our allies. And while Afghanistan still faces significant challenges, I can say with the perspective of having first led U.S. diplomatic efforts on Afghanistan 12 years ago, that we are closer than ever to achieving this goal. I'd like to spend a few minutes reviewing our efforts and the progress Afghanistan is making.

SECURITY TRANSITION AND PARTNERSHIP

The Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), signed by President Obama and President Karzai in May 2012, codified the terms of our partnership after 2014. It looked ahead to a Transformation Decade of cooperation, as the Afghans continued to strengthen their institutions, improve governance, and stabilize their economy. While making clear that the United States does not seek permanent bases in Afghanistan or a presence that is a threat to Afghanistan's neighbors, the SPA included a provision to negotiate a Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) between the two countries which would govern future security cooperation.

After a year of negotiations to conclude the text, that agreement was submitted two weeks ago to a Loya Jirga, a traditional gathering of 2500 Afghan leaders from all parts of the country. After three days of debate, the Loya Jirga overwhelmingly endorsed the BSA as written and urged President Karzai to sign it before the end of the year. This decision underscores the clear and strong desire of the Afghan people to continue their partnership with the United States and the international community and their determination to move forward, away from the Taliban past.

The United States agrees with the Afghan people. Signing the BSA promptly is the path to a partnership in support of Afghan efforts to achieve lasting peace, security, and development. It will send an important signal to the people of Afghanistan, to the Taliban, to our allies and partners, and to the region. For the Afghan people, it will reduce anxiety and uncertainty about the future, allowing them to concentrate on the upcoming elections and to invest with confidence in their own economy. A signed BSA will tell the Taliban, who may think that the end of 2014 means the end of international support for Afghanistan, that their only path to peace is by ending violence, breaking ties with al Qaida and accepting the Afghan constitution, including its protections for women and minorities. A signed BSA will assure the region that the United States will remain engaged there and not abandon Afghanistan as we did in 1989 after the Soviet withdrawal. To our NATO Allies and other international partners, a signed BSA will open the door for NATO to begin negotiations on the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with Afghanistan that will cover its forces participating in the train, advise, and assist mission.

For all of these reasons, the Administration is committed to expeditious signature of the BSA. Delaying signature is in no one's interest. Delay would add another element of uncertainty as Afghans prepare for the April, 2014 election to choose

President Karzai's successor. For the United States and our NATO Allies, delay means a lack of clarity needed to plan for a post-2014 military presence. That, in turn, would jeopardize fulfillment of the pledges of assistance that NATO and other countries made at the Chicago and Tokyo conferences in 2012. As Ambassador Rice made clear in her recent visit to Kabul, although it is not our preference, without a prompt signature we will have no choice but to initiate planning for a post-2014 future in which there would be no U.S. or NATO troop presence in Afghanistan.

Let me make clear, however, that plans are not decisions, and assure you that we are not about to decide to abandon all we and the Afghan people have achieved over the past 12 years. Based on the results of the Loya Jirga, expressions of public opinion throughout the country and discussions throughout my own visit to Kabul last week, I don't believe that there can be any serious doubt that the Afghan people want American and NATO forces to stay and recognize that the BSA is a necessary prerequisite. The BSA is also the keystone of a much wider international commitment, involving over 70 countries ready to provide economic and security assistance to Afghanistan beyond 2015.

Afghanistan's regional neighbors, with the exception of Iran, also understand the importance of the BSA. President Putin of Russia, President Xi of China, Prime Minister Singh of India and Prime Minister Sharif of Pakistan have all personally urged President Karzai to conclude the BSA in recent weeks. Several of these leaders are no fans of an American military presence in Central Asia, but all recognize that without continued international military and economic support, Afghanistan risks falling back into civil war, with the attendant rise in extremist groups, outflow of refugees and disruptions in commerce that would threaten the region as a whole.

Given this coincidence of Afghan public and regional governmental opinion, I see little chance that the BSA will not be eventually concluded. Awaiting the arrival of the next Afghan President to do so, however, will impose large and unnecessary costs on the Afghan people. Already the anxiety caused by President Karzai's refusal to heed the advice of the Loya Jirga is having that effect. While in Kabul last week I learned from the World Bank and other sources that the Afghan currency is slipping in value, inflation increasing, capital fleeing and property values dropping. Probably for the first time since 2001 the outflow of population exceeds the return of refugees. The longer this uncertainty about the future international commitment to Afghanistan continues, the more anxiety will increase,

potentially dominating the upcoming Presidential elections, threatening to turn these into a polarizing rather than unifying experience for the country.

Prolonged uncertainty over the BSA will also erode larger international support for Afghanistan. At Tokyo in July 2012 and at Chicago in May 2012, the international community pledged billions to the support of the Afghan security forces and the Afghan economy beyond 2014. As in the United States, the fulfillment of the pledges is dependent on public support and parliamentary approval. Prolonged delay in concluding the BSA, and the also required NATO equivalent agreement can only diminish the prospect that these pledges will be fully met.

As the President has said, the U.S. combat mission will end in Afghanistan at the end of 2014. The BSA does not prescribe the number of U.S. forces that may be present in Afghanistan after 2014, but it will give us the invitation to remain that President Obama will need as he makes that force level decision. By next February, there will be 34,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, down from roughly 100,000 at the height of the surge, and any post-2014 military presence will be much smaller. Those who remain will concentrate on two specific, narrow missions: counter-terrorism operations against the remnants of al Qaeda and its affiliates, and training, advising, and assisting Afghan security forces.

I know my DoD colleague Deputy Assistant Secretary Dumont will discuss the security transition in greater detail, but it is important to note that, while the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) are still a work in progress, there is reason to be encouraged, thanks to capabilities that have been fostered and developed by the U.S. military and our allies. Our efforts are making a critical difference and can continue to do so. I should note that the Afghan people themselves share this assessment. According to a recent Asia Foundation survey, 88% of Afghans have confidence in the Afghan National Army and 72% in the Afghan National Police.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

I know that Assistant Administrator Sampler will talk about USAID's efforts to deliver and monitor civilian assistance in Afghanistan, how that assistance has improved the lives of ordinary Afghans, and the challenges his agency faces working in that country. I am happy to talk about the specifics of what we are doing, but I first want to offer some encouraging news about how we are doing overall. For the past nine years, the Asia Foundation has conducted a nationwide survey of Afghan attitudes and opinions, tracking long-term trends among the

population. The latest annual Asia Foundation of more than 9,000 Afghans drawn from every province was released last week, and it confirmed, through the eyes of ordinary Afghans, the depth and durability of the progress Afghanistan has made, with our support.

A few numbers stand out. Today, 57% of all Afghans believe their country is moving in the right direction. This number has increased steadily since 2008, when it stood at 38%. Not surprisingly, the majority – 76% – said they were better off economically than they were under the Taliban. Three quarters gave their national government a positive assessment although they remained critical of subnational government and Parliament and concerned about corruption at all levels. Five in six Afghans – men and women – believe that women should have an education. 75% believe it is acceptable to criticize the government in public—a sign of an active democracy with an independent media, which is the civilian institution in which Afghans have the most confidence. Sympathy for armed opposition groups is far lower than in 2009 and yet, nevertheless, a majority of Afghans understand the need for peace and support Afghan-led reconciliation efforts. The overall picture is one of an aspiring nation that has witnessed and welcomed the progress that the international effort has helped bring about. These are the people whose representatives at the Loya Jirga overwhelmingly approved the BSA.

This growing optimism among Afghans is due in part to the increasing capability of some of their institutions, none of which existed in 2001. According to the poll, the Afghan media is one of the country's most trusted institution. The growth of a free media is one of the great achievements of reconstruction in Afghanistan. When the Taliban ruled, people had few modern means to communicate with one another (there were fewer than 40,000 phones in the country) or to get information (there was one state-run TV station). Now, more than 18 million Afghans have phones and the telecommunications network covers 90% of the population. Afghans are also eager for news, which they see on one of the 75 TV stations or hear on the 175 radio stations available. This is not, I should add, a triumph of quantity over quality. In the most recent worldwide assessment of press freedom by Reporters Without Borders, Afghanistan outranked Pakistan and India and every other country but one in its region. The Loya Jirga that considered the BSA was televised nationally and Afghans watched as their representatives debated their future. This would have been technically impossible and politically unimaginable 15 years ago.

There is a body of research that demonstrates the effectiveness of the international effort in Afghanistan. Of the 20 major post-Cold war interventions conducted by the United States, United Nations, and others, Afghanistan had the greatest improvements in the UN's Human Development Index, was third among twenty improvements in government effectiveness as measured by the World Bank, government, and was second out of these twenty in growth of per capita income. Afghanistan's progress should be compared with that of other countries that have faced similar levels of conflict. Even postwar stabilization in European countries over these same decades, where conditions for stabilization have been much more favorable, has taken many years.

Afghan institutions are performing better, in part, because they are increasingly integrated within the regional economy of Central and South Asia. With considerable financial and technical assistance from the United States and American supported international agencies, millions of Afghans can now access electricity from power lines stretching across their northern border into Central Asia. In the last five years, trade between Afghanistan with its South and Central Asian neighbors has far outpaced trade with the outside world. Building strong state, civil society, and private sector institutions by economically integrating Afghanistan within its neighborhood remains at the heart of our New Silk Road vision.

POLITICAL TRANSITION

Despite all of the focus on the BSA in recent days, the political transition is next year's critical event. A timely presidential election in April can be a unifying moment for the country, consolidating the gains of the past decade and demonstrating that the Afghan people would rather use politics than violence to solve their differences. If successful, this will be the first peaceful transfer of power from one elected leader to another in Afghanistan's history.

The Afghans have committed to holding credible, inclusive, and transparent elections, and they are on track to meet this commitment. Larry Sampler will talk about what we are doing to support this effort, so let me talk about what the Afghans have done and are doing. As with elections anywhere, many things can go wrong between now and election day in April, but Afghanistan is far ahead, in terms of technical preparations, of where it was in previous electoral cycles. Afghanistan's last elections were conducted under rules established by presidential decree because the political system had been unable to reach consensus on necessary legislation. Compare that to today. This past summer, Afghan

legislators passed the laws establishing the structures that will shape the vote and procedures to evaluate complaints. In July, President Karzai signed that legislation into law. Now, the Independent Elections Commission (IEC) is implementing those laws, working with the Ministry of Interior on the security plans that will be critical to the success of the election. The IEC is also engaged in a nationwide voter registration “top up” program, which, thus far, has enrolled 3.1 million new voters of which 1 million are women. Although women’s participation in the process still needs to improve, 3 of the prospective Vice Presidents are women, as are over 300 (11%) of the provincial council candidates. Presidential candidates have registered and last month the IEC approved a final official list of 11 candidates. Official campaigning gets underway in February, when rallies, ads, and televised debates will take place.

We have made clear that, in the upcoming election, the United States will support the process, not any individual party or candidate. We will continue to assist Afghan electoral authorities, the Afghan government, parliament and civil society in their efforts to strengthen the electoral system and to minimize electoral fraud. While the Afghan government has taken encouraging steps to ensure security for poll workers, the Independent Election Commission and other elections-related workers, we will continue to monitor security trends as the elections near. Our military experts are also helping the Afghans with security planning. That said, ISAF planners have been surprised by the extremely limited number of requests from the Afghan security forces as they support IEC voter registration efforts in insecure areas of the country – what is, in effect, a dry run for the challenges they will need to handle during next April’s vote.

Enduring stability will require reconciliation and we remain committed to supporting an Afghan peace process. Our objective has been, and continues to be, to promote and support a political process by which Afghans sit down with other Afghans to determine the future of their country. The outcomes of peace and reconciliation must be the Taliban and other insurgent groups breaking ties with al Qaeda, ending violence, and accepting Afghanistan’s constitution, including its protections for women and minorities. Even as we remain committed to supporting a peace process, we do not plan to let up our fight against international terrorism in Afghanistan or our support to Afghan forces. Our military and diplomatic efforts continue to be mutually reinforcing.

I do not mean to present an overly rosy picture of Afghanistan’s present or future. Many challenges remain. The Taliban continue to fight. Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world and the drawdown of international military

forces will reduce economic growth. Afghans still need to put in place the physical infrastructure and legal framework to encourage long-term sustainable development and attract private investment. Corruption is a major problem – one the Afghan public is aware of and one the Afghan government promised to reduce as part of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. The narcotics trade is far from under control, as the recent announcement of a record poppy harvest showed. All of these require sustained commitment from the Afghans and the further development of their institutions to remedy. But most Afghans want to fix them, as the survey shows, and international support is vital to helping them do so.

As we focus on the pivotal year 2014, which will mark the end of the U.S. combat mission and what we hope and expect will be the successful transfer of power to a new, democratically elected Afghan president, we should also keep an eye on the future of this region. Afghanistan has a young population; more than 65% of Afghans are under 25 and the average age is 18. Over the last decade many of these young Afghans have gone to school, learned to use e-mail, set up Facebook pages, become connected to other Afghans outside their provinces and ethnic groups, reclaimed their artistic heritage, become familiar with other countries and ways of life, even learned English. (There are 1.5 – 2 million Internet users.) They participate in civil society and establish think tanks. They are moving from the rural areas to the cities for jobs and education. Sustaining our relationship with Afghanistan means maintaining our connection with those young Afghans. Their future is crucial to the stability of the region and ultimately the security of the United States. Right now these young men and women want democracy, access to free media, economic opportunities, transparency and education. A partnership with the United States will help them consolidate the institutions that did not exist 12 years ago, but which have grown in their lifetimes and which will help ensure that these youth rebuff the recruitment of extremists and help to build a peaceful democratic partner for the United States and our allies.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that despite the many challenges, we have much to build on as we look to the future of America's partnership with Afghanistan. Thanks in large part to the generosity of the American people, the courage of its men and women in uniform and the bipartisan support of Congress, Afghanistan is a fundamentally different country than it was 12 years ago. It remains a hopeful country, although uncertainty over conclusion of the BSA is unnecessarily increasing anxiety at just the point in Afghanistan's growing self-reliance where reassurance is most necessary. This administration looks forward to continuing its work with Congress to help ensure that as these hopes are realized our own vital national security interests are secured.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Ambassador.
We are going to go to Mr. Dumont next.

**STATEMENT OF MR. MICHAEL J. DUMONT, DEPUTY ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN, & CEN-
TRAL ASIA, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

Mr. DUMONT. Chairman Royce, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the upcoming year of transition in Afghanistan.

Before turning our attention—

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Dumont, just move the mic a little closer.

Mr. DUMONT. Before turning our attention to the upcoming year, I would like to quickly review the status of the security transition in Afghanistan. In June of this year, the Afghans reached a decisive milestone, assuming lead responsibility for security country-wide. This milestone also signaled the shift in the International Security Assistance Force's primary mission from combat to training, advising, and assisting the Afghan security forces.

The ANSF, a large integrated force, are now successfully providing security for the people of Afghanistan. This past summer fighting season was the first time that both planned and executed with the Afghans wholly in the lead. The ANSF proved to be both capable and resilient, conducting nearly all combat operations across Afghanistan while taking the majority of the casualties. They successfully held the security gains of recent years, and the insurgency failed to achieve its stated objective.

The fact that the ANSF, a force in its infancy just 4 years ago, is increasingly able to maintain the gains made by a coalition of 49 nations, is a significant accomplishment. As we look toward the coming year, DoD will focus on the key areas of support for a successful political transition in Afghanistan, continuation of the train, advise, and assist mission to develop the ANSF into a sustainable force, a narrowly focused counterterrorism mission, and the draw-down and realignment of U.S. forces for a post-2014 train, advise, and assist mission.

Our train, advise, and assist mission will continue to emphasize developing ANSF capabilities to conduct high-level planning and execution of operations, as well as the capability to sustain and enable those operations.

Ministerial-level assistance will continue to be focused on institutionalizing the systems and capabilities necessary to organize, resource, train, and sustain the ANSF. This will include acquisition, contracting, strategy and policy development, human resources, management, and financial and resource management. The ANSF can be a guarantor for a secure and democratic Afghanistan but not without continued progress toward developing a sustainable and professional force.

As we draw down our presence, we will focus on improving accountability and increasing oversight of funding for the ANSF. This is to ensure adequate capacity and measures of accountability are in place as we incrementally increase direct contributions to the Afghan Government while their financial management capacity grows.

Coalition forces are working with the Afghans to finish implementing automated systems that will increase transparency and accountability in the areas of pay, logistics, human resources, and financial management. They are also focused on developing the technical expertise necessary in the Afghan security ministries to plan, program, budget, and execute financial transactions to sustain the ANSF.

Although the combat leadership shift from ISAF to the ANSF demonstrates first and foremost the capability and resolve of the Afghan security forces to secure their people and their nation, it also enables the United States and other coalition partners to reduce their forces.

As President Obama announced in the State of the Union address in February 2013, the U.S. will reduce its force level to 34,000 personnel by February 12, 2014. This force level will generally be maintained through the election period to ensure we are able to provide support if requested.

The steady pace of force level reductions from now to February 2014, and after the election period, will allow our train, advise, and assist effort to consolidate from lower to higher levels of command as the ANSF displays greater capacity. This progression will enable effective assistance as coalition forces drawn down and allow for a smooth transition of the ANSF to operate with reduced coalition support.

The ANSF will exercise greater autonomy and leadership of security operations while still having access to support from ISAF as required and as available. While this process is underway, NATO remains on track to bring the ISAF mission to a close by the end of 2014 and transition to the new NATO train, advise, and assist mission.

The mission for U.S. forces in Afghanistan is also shifting to a continued counterterrorism mission against al-Qaeda and its affiliates in training, advising, and equipping Afghan forces as part of the NATO mission. As the President has made clear, however, the United States must secure an agreement that protects U.S. troops and must have an invitation from the Afghan Government to fulfill the promise of the post-2014 partnership discussed at the 2012 Chicago NATO summit.

We welcome the Loya Jirga's endorsement of the bilateral security agreement, and we are prepared to sign the agreement. Concluding the BSA promptly would be an important signal to the people of Afghanistan, to the Taliban, and our allies, and to the world that we intend to continue our partnership in support of Afghanistan.

After more than a decade of dedication and sacrifice by our forces, our coalition partners, and the Afghan people along multiple lines of effort, we have seen remarkable turnaround in Afghanistan. Today, the Afghan people have greater economic opportunity, greater access to health care, education, and more freedoms and individual rights than in the past.

Thank you for continuing to support—your support for the mission in Afghanistan and our service men and women. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Dumont follows:]

STATEMENT OF

MICHAEL J. DUMONT
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN, AND CENTRAL ASIA

BEFORE THE

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

“Afghanistan in 2014: The Year of Transition”

December 11, 2013

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and discuss the upcoming year of transition in Afghanistan. It is an honor to be here with Ambassador Dobbins and Mr. Sampler.

Before turning our attention to the upcoming year, I would like to first review the status of the security transition in Afghanistan. In June of this year, the Afghans reached a decisive milestone, assuming lead responsibility for security countrywide. This milestone also signaled a shift in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) primary mission from combat to training, advising, and assisting the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The ANSF – a large, integrated force with an army, air force, and police force, composed of nearly 352,000 personnel – are now successfully providing security for the people of Afghanistan. This past summer fighting season was the first that was both planned and executed with the Afghans wholly in the lead. The ANSF proved to be capable and resilient, conducting nearly all combat operations across Afghanistan while taking the majority of the casualties. They successfully held the security gains of recent years, and the insurgency failed to achieve its stated objectives. The fact that the ANSF – a force in its infancy just four years ago – is increasingly able to maintain the gains made by a coalition of 49 nations is a significant accomplishment.

As we look toward the coming year, the Department of Defense will focus on four key areas: support for a successful political transition in Afghanistan; continuation of the train, advise, and assist (TAA) mission to develop the ANSF into sustainable force; a narrowly focused counter-terrorism mission; and the drawdown and realignment of U.S. forces in Afghanistan for a post-2014 TAA mission.

The presidential elections in Afghanistan, scheduled for April 5, 2014, will be the first constitutional transfer of power from one president to another in Afghanistan's history. For the first time, Afghans are solely responsible for administering the process and providing security, with international forces in a supporting role. We are encouraged by the effectiveness the Afghans have shown in conducting early and well-coordinated preparations for the elections. The success of voter registration efforts is a promising indication of Afghan planning and capacity.

Many Afghans see security as central to inclusive participation on election day. The Ministry of Interior – which is responsible for election security – has begun security planning and expects to finalize a comprehensive election support plan by early next year. In accordance with the overall security transition and respect for Afghan sovereignty, ISAF, including U.S. forces, will be prepared to provide security assistance if requested by the Afghan government. If requested, the U.S. is prepared to provide technical advice, logistics, and security support to assist Afghan efforts to ensure the elections are secure, credible, and inclusive. The United States does not support particular candidates or parties, nor

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will the United States interfere with the electoral process. A legitimate election process that enables a peaceful transition of power will be a key milestone in Afghan history.

In 2014, the TAA mission will continue to emphasize developing ANSF capabilities to conduct higher-level planning and execution of operations, as well as the capability to sustain and enable those operations. Our training mission focuses on improving the quality and professionalism of the ANSF, with particular emphasis on sustainment capacity and ministerial development. For the fielded ANSF, assistance will be based on five pillars key to long-term sustainability: training; leadership; command and control; sustainment and logistics; and combined arms integration. Ministerial-level assistance will continue to focus on institutionalizing the systems and capabilities necessary to organize, resource, train, and sustain the force. This includes: acquisition; contracting; strategy and policy development; human resources management; and financial and resource management. The ANSF can be a guarantor for a secure and democratic Afghanistan, but not without continued progress towards developing a sustainable and professional force.

As we draw down our presence, we will focus on improving accountability and increasing oversight of funding for the ANSF. This will ensure adequate capacity and measures of accountability are in place as we incrementally increase direct contributions to the Afghan government while their financial management capacity grows. Coalition forces are working with the Afghans to finish implementing automated systems that will increase transparency and accountability in the areas of pay, logistics, human resources, and financial management. The Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan is also focused on developing the technical expertise necessary in the Afghan security ministries to plan, program, budget, and execute financial transactions to sustain the ANSF. Capacity building and improved accountability will help instill sound financial management practices in daily operations while mitigating the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse.

Although the combat leadership shift from ISAF to the ANSF demonstrates first and foremost the capability and resolve of the Afghan security forces to secure their people and their nation, it also enables the United States and other coalition partners to reduce their forces. As President Obama announced in the State of the Union address in February 2013, the United States will reduce its force level to 34,000 personnel by February 12, 2014. This force level will generally be maintained through the election period to ensure we are able to provide support, if requested. The steady pace of force level reductions from now to February 2014, and after the election period, will allow our TAA effort to consolidate from lower to higher levels of command as the ANSF display greater capacity. This progression will enable effective assistance as Coalition forces draw-down and allow for a smooth transition of the ANSF to operate with reduced coalition support. The ANSF will exercise greater autonomy and leadership of security operations, while still having access to support from ISAF, as required and available.

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With this process underway, NATO remains on track to bring the ISAF mission to a close by the end of 2014 and to transition to the NATO RESOLUTE SUPPORT train, advise, and assist mission. The mission for U.S. forces in Afghanistan is also shifting to a continued counter-terrorism mission against al'Qaeda and its affiliates, and training, advising and equipping Afghan forces as part of the NATO mission. As the President has made clear, however, the United States must secure an agreement that protects U.S. troops and must have an invitation from the Afghan government to fulfill the promise of the post-2014 partnership discussed at the 2012 Chicago NATO Summit. We welcome the Loya Jirga's strong endorsement of the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA), and we are prepared to sign the agreement. Concluding the BSA promptly would be an important signal to the people of Afghanistan, to the Taliban, to our allies and partners, and to the world that we intend to continue our partnership in support of Afghanistan. The Bilateral Security Agreement is an opportunity to sustain the partnership between the United States and Afghanistan to support Afghans in achieving lasting peace, security, and development. We look forward to signing the agreement as soon as possible, and we will keep the Congress informed of any developments. NATO also needs to conclude a status of forces agreement with Afghanistan for the NATO mission to move forward post-2014.

After more than a decade of dedication and sacrifice by our forces, our coalition partners, and the Afghan people themselves, along multiple lines of effort – military, diplomatic, governance and development – we have seen a remarkable turnaround in Afghanistan. Today, the Afghan people have greater economic opportunity, greater access to health care, better and more education, and more freedoms and individual rights than in the past. This is a critical time for our shared effort in Afghanistan. The transition to a new train, advise, and assist mission and a narrowly focused counter-terrorism mission is in sight.

Thank you for your continued support to the mission in Afghanistan and our service men and women. I look forward to answering your questions.

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Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.
Mr. Sampler.

**STATEMENT OF MR. DONALD L. SAMPLER, ASSISTANT TO THE
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN
AFFAIRS, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. SAMPLER. Chairman Royce, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify before you today. I have been working on and in Afghanistan, in both civilian and military roles, since 2002. In addition to having worked with the Afghan Emergency Loya Jirga, and then the Afghan Constitutional Loya Jirga, I have served as a representative of an international NGO, and as Chief of Staff of the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

After the fall of the Taliban, I saw firsthand an Afghanistan that had been devastated by decades of conflict. The unprecedented investment of U.S. taxpayers and the international community, in partnership with the Afghans themselves, has created transformational changes in Afghanistan that are reflected in the United Nations 2013 Human Development Index. Afghanistan improved its score in that index by more than 60 percent, more than any other country.

Changes of this magnitude are not made overnight, especially in such a deeply traditional society and such a challenging operational environment. The results of international civilian assistance are significant but fragile. For example, in 2002, there were only 900,000 Afghan children in school, and virtually none of them were girls. Today, there are nearly 8 million children in school and more than one-third of them are girls.

Life expectancy in Afghanistan has increased from 42 years to over 62 years. Maternal mortality rates have declined by 80 percent, and child mortality has decreased by almost 50 percent. In 2002, only 6 percent of Afghans had access to reliable electricity. Today that number is 18 percent.

In 2002, there were very few fixed telephone lines, and making a telephone call out of Afghanistan required a satellite telephone. Today, the combined phone networks in Afghanistan cover 90 percent of the population, and 85 percent of women in Afghanistan have access to a cell phone.

Today, there are over 3,000 women-owned businesses and associations. Almost 20 percent of Afghans enrolled in higher education are now women. And women are active participants in the Afghan political process.

As we enter the transition period, USAID's strategy is threefold. First, to maintain and make durable the gains in health, education, and the empowerment of women. Second, to mitigate the economic impact of the military drawdown. And, finally, to foster improved stability by supporting legitimate and effective Afghan governance, to include the 2014 elections.

USAID places a high priority on ensuring that American taxpayer funds are used wisely. While many of the issues in Afghanistan are unique to that country, monitoring projects and challenging environments is something that our agency does well around the world. In designing the Afghanistan monitoring strat-

egy, USAID has incorporated lessons learned from our monitoring programs in places like Colombia, Pakistan, and South Sudan.

I will note that these programs which form the basis of our Afghanistan monitoring program have been reviewed in six separate Inspector General reports, as well as three reports by the Government Accountability Office.

Finally, external audits provide useful oversight and discipline for our work, and complement and reinforce USAID's own efforts to ensure U.S. tax dollars are used effectively and efficiently. There are currently over 100 audits that are ongoing now of USAID programs in Afghanistan. The bottom line is that USAID will terminate programs if we feel a particular program is not adequately overseen or is not producing development results.

With regard to the elections, a credible, transparent, and inclusive electoral process is essential and central to U.S. Government's transition strategy and is critical to Afghan stability and democratic development. USAID remains focused on supporting an inclusive and democratic process by supporting Afghan electoral authorities and by building the capacity of democratic stakeholders in Afghanistan to participate in a robust and informed way.

USAID supports independent domestic observers, civil society, media, political parties, helping them appropriately engage in the democratic process. USAID is also supporting the participation of women in all aspects of the electoral process. We are promoting the hiring and training of female polling staff, promoting public outreach to women voters by civil society and public officials, and enhancing the ability of women candidates to campaign effectively.

In conclusion, I have worked in Afghanistan as a member of the Department of Defense, USAID, and the Department of State. I have attended ramp ceremonies for the fallen heroes of all three organizations. I am personally, and USAID is institutionally, keenly aware of the enormous sacrifices made by Americans to build a secure and stable Afghanistan. And we fully understand the need for constant vigilance, particularly during this delicate transition period.

We are making tough decisions, we are prioritizing our investments, and we are looking for things that have the greatest potential for long-term success.

As USAID navigates through the 2014 transition period, we continue to be committed to safeguarding taxpayer funds and ensuring that the remarkable development goals and development progress made in Afghanistan is maintained and made durable.

It is an honor to be able to share with you today a small glimpse of what USAID is doing in that regard. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sampler follows:]

Statement for the Record
United States Agency for International Development
Donald L. Sampler
Assistant to the Administrator and Director
of the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs
Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs
“Afghanistan 2014: Year of Transition”
Wednesday, December 11, 2013, 10:00 a.m.

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify before you today to discuss the role of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in advancing U.S. Government policy through USAID's civilian assistance program during the transition in Afghanistan. It is an honor to appear before you today with Ambassador Dobbins and Deputy Assistant Secretary Dumont.

USAID has been fully engaged in Afghanistan for 12 years, and during that time Afghanistan has made remarkable development gains in many sectors. This transition period is a pivotal moment for Afghanistan, in anticipation of which USAID has been planning and adjusting its programming to maximize sustainability and accountability.

I have been working on and in Afghanistan in both civilian and military capacities since 2002. In addition to having worked with the Afghan Constitutional Loya Jirga and the Afghan Emergency Loya Jirga, I have served as a representative of an international non-governmental organization, and as chief of staff of the U.N. Assistance Mission to Afghanistan. I bring these perspectives to USAID's work today.

Continued U.S. engagement is critical to Afghanistan's stability and to protecting the vital interests of our own country. Improving governance, creating economic opportunity, and supporting civil society are critical to solidifying our military gains and advancing our political

and diplomatic goals for Afghanistan and the region. In order to achieve these goals, USAID has reoriented its assistance program to lessen its stabilization work and place an even greater emphasis on long-term, sustainable development programming.

USAID and Results

After the fall of the Taliban regime, I saw firsthand an Afghanistan devastated by decades of conflict. The unprecedented investment by U.S. taxpayers and the international community, in partnership with the Afghans, has created transformational changes in Afghanistan that are reflected in the United Nation's 2013 Human Development Index. Afghanistan improved its score more than any other country in the index since 2000 on a percentage basis: a nearly 60 percent increase. Although Afghanistan had a very low starting point, the upward trends show powerful aggregation over a decade and strongly reflect areas of USAID investment.

Changes of this magnitude are not made overnight, especially in such a deeply traditional society and challenging operational environment. The results of international civilian assistance, led by USAID in concert with the broader U.S. Government, are significant, though fragile:

- Education: In 2002, there were only 900,000 Afghan children in school, and virtually none of them were girls. Today, nearly 8 million children are registered to attend school and more than one-third of them are girls.
- Health: Life expectancy has increased from 42 years to over 62 since 2001; the maternal mortality rate has declined by 80 percent from 1,600 deaths to 327 per 100,000 births; and child mortality decreased from 172 to 97 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- Energy: In 2002, only 6 percent of Afghans had access to reliable electricity. Today 18 percent do. In addition, USAID assistance has helped put the Afghan national power company (DABS) on a path to become fully self-sustaining. DABS collected \$220 million from the sale of electricity in 2012, an increase of 67 percent from 2010.

- **Mobile Technology:** In 2002, there were few fixed telephone lines and making calls outside of Afghanistan required a satellite phone. Today, the combined phone network covers 90 percent of the Afghan population. 85 percent of women have access to a mobile phone. The telecommunications sector is Afghanistan's greatest source of foreign direct investment, largest remitter of taxes to the government, and biggest licit employer, providing jobs for 100,000 Afghans.
- **Women:** Today, there are over 3,000 women-owned business and associations; almost 20 percent of Afghans enrolled in higher education are women; and women are active participants in the Afghan political process, with three female Cabinet members of the Afghan Cabinet, 68 Members of Parliament (of the 249 seats), and three women vice presidential candidates.

USAID Transition Strategy

Over the last two years USAID has regularly reviewed and adjusted its programs to ensure that they advance the Administration's strategic objectives and are necessary, achievable, and sustainable. USAID's transition strategy is three-fold:

- Maintain and make durable the gains made in health, education, and the empowerment of women;
- Mitigate the economic impact of the drawdown through a robust focus on the agriculture sector, private sector development, the operations and maintenance of infrastructure investments, and the future potential of the extractives industry; and,
- Foster improved stability by supporting legitimate and effective Afghan governance, including the 2014 presidential election.

Operationally, USAID has adjusted its implementation model to improve sustainability and meet the challenges presented by the transition through:

- Focusing assistance in Regional Economic Zones (REZs) that cover major population centers and promote regional trade and economic opportunities;

- Developing a multi-tiered oversight strategy that, along with other monitoring and evaluation efforts, will continue to ensure adequate oversight over projects in the field, as field staff decrease;
- Transforming USAID's approach in Afghanistan to one of mutual accountability, ensuring alignment with Afghan priorities and promoting Afghan reforms; and
- Implementing USAID's 2011 Afghanistan Sustainability Guidance, which emphasizes the principles of (1) increasing Afghan ownership and capacity; (2) contributing to stability and confidence, and (3) effective and cost-efficient programming.

With these parameters in mind, USAID works in coordination with the U.S. Government interagency and the Afghan Government to review and revise USAID's Afghanistan portfolio. For example, in consultation with the Government of Afghanistan in 2012, USAID substantially downscaled a five-year, \$32 million agricultural faculties program found to be duplicative of efforts by another donor.

Sustaining the development gains made over the past decade will require continued reforms by the Afghan Government. USAID is active in promoting these necessary reforms in coordination with our international partners through the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF). As part of TMAF, USAID has established a bilateral incentive fund to encourage action on key reforms. Funds will be released as the Afghan Government meets certain thresholds of progress on the key TMAF indicators.

For instance, as a result of the Afghan government's progress in meeting commitments related to the upcoming elections, USAID is preparing to release \$15 million (out of the \$75 million in incentive funds for this year) through the World Bank's Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). The Afghanistan Ministry of Finance is now working with other Ministries to undertake agreed reforms to ensure that the remaining \$60 million of U.S. incentive funds for this year are focused on Afghan priorities. In addition, the United States coordinates closely with the Afghan Government and other donors to prioritize reform objectives and coordinate other incentive programs, including those that are part of the ARTF.

Throughout this transition, USAID continues to closely coordinate with the Departments of Defense and State and other relevant agencies. For example, USAID has placed Liaison Officers with both the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Joint Command and the Special Operations Joint Task Force to advise these commands on the design and implementation of development projects. USAID has two representatives on the Department of Defense's Commanders Emergency Response Program board, and these positions ensure the Agency's visibility on proposed military development projects and synergies of such projects with USAID's programming. USAID also participated in the Department of State-led "Transfer of Tasks" exercise, which helped to inform the U.S. Embassy and USAID Mission on how to responsibly transfer development-related activities undertaken by ISAF to other U.S. Government entities or to the Afghan Government. Throughout this process, USAID has drawn on lessons learned from the Iraq experience to help navigate the transition period.

Oversight and Accountability

USAID places the highest priority on ensuring that American taxpayer funds are used wisely, effectively, and for their intended purpose. While many of the issues in Afghanistan are unique to that country, monitoring projects in very challenging environments is something the Agency has been doing for years in many places around the world.

In addition to the usual oversight USAID undertakes in every country where it works, USAID's Accountable Assistance for Afghanistan initiative (known as A3) focuses on four areas:

1. Award Mechanisms – We rely less on large agreements and have increased the number of smaller and more flexible agreements. We are also utilizing assistance awards that provide the most visibility on project costs, such as cost-reimbursable contracts and limiting layers of subcontracts to two.
2. Partner Vetting – The USAID Mission established a Vetting Support Unit in February 2011. The unit conducts checks on non-U.S. companies and non-U.S. key individuals for prime contractors, sub-contractors, grant recipients and sub-grantees to determine whether or not they

are associated with known malign entities or individuals. We have kept \$41.5 million from being awarded as a result of our vetting process.

3. Financial Controls – We are enhancing controls on project funds, such as using electronic funds transfers in lieu of cash payments, using independent financial monitors to verify appropriate usage of funds, ensuring close review of recipients/contractor’s claims prior to payment, and performing audits of locally incurred cost.

4. Project Oversight – USAID uses a multi-tiered monitoring approach that includes, as appropriate, independent monitoring contractors; observation by U.S. Government staff; reporting by implementing partners, local non-governmental organizations and civil society; and use of technological tools, such as time- and date-stamped photos. By using multiple sources of monitoring data, USAID can compare information received from separate sources to ensure the greatest degree of oversight possible.

USAID will terminate projects, or specific activity sites within projects, if the Agency determines that adequate oversight is not possible or adequate development progress is not being made. In designing the Afghanistan monitoring strategy, USAID incorporated lessons learned from its use of third-party independent monitoring in challenging environments across the world, including Colombia, Iraq, Pakistan, and South Sudan, as well as from the USAID Office of Inspector General (OIG) and U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) audits, as well as public feedback.

USAID has also developed a new unit at the Mission, the Implementation Support Team, which is responsible for providing an additional layer of critical review and analysis for the many streams of monitoring information and for providing USAID leadership with alternative courses of action for addressing challenges with project implementation. In addition, USAID is continuing its close coordination with other donors to share best practices and expertise on monitoring.

USAID also has a rigorous system of oversight for its “on-budget” programming with the Afghan Government. This means that USAID conducts assessments to ensure that each Afghan ministry or entity has systems in place to manage on-budget assistance. To date, USAID has assessed thirteen ministries, but has limited its on-budget assistance to six ministries, subject to stringent safeguards.

For “on-budget” assistance, USAID utilizes multiple levels of protection to mitigate risks before disbursing any funds. These measures may include, but are not limited to, requiring the Afghan Ministry of Finance to establish non-commingled, separate bank accounts for each project with USAID; disbursement of funds only after USAID has verified that the ministry has achieved a performance milestone or USAID has verified accrued costs; an annual audit by a USAID OIG-approved firm; substantial involvement and oversight by USAID staff in procurement processes; independent management, monitoring and evaluation of services; and technical assistance to increase the capacity of ministries while addressing any vulnerabilities or weaknesses identified in the assessments. All “on-budget” assistance requires compliance with USAID accountability and oversight procedures, including site visits to ministries by USAID staff or independent contractors, as well as regular reporting. Ministries are required to fully comply with the mitigation measures prior to and throughout the disbursement process. If Afghan ministries fail to adhere to these measures, the agreements are subject to immediate suspension or termination.

For example, USAID has worked closely with the Ministry of Education to assess its financial management systems, implement extensive mitigation measures for the risks these assessments identified, and audit their progress and monitor results. USAID negotiated a stringent series of preconditions and financial controls pursuant to the launch of a \$27 million textbook printing program, part of the Basic Education, Literacy, and Technical Vocational Education and Training Project. The specific steps USAID required to mitigate these risks included use of a non-commingled separate bank account from which all project disbursements are to be accounted for; an annual audit including quarterly audit testing of all project disbursements under the agreement by an OIG-approved certified public accounting firm; and USAID involvement and mandatory clearance of the textbook procurement cycle for each separate procurement undertaken under the agreement. USAID subsequently obligated a total of \$20 million towards the agreement, and to date \$11.7 million has been disbursed.

Finally, audits provide useful oversight and discipline, and complement and reinforce USAID's own efforts to ensure U.S. tax dollars are used effectively and efficiently. There are currently over 100 on-going audits of USAID programs in Afghanistan. In fiscal year 2013, the GAO, USAID OIG, and Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR) completed over 65 financial and program audits in Afghanistan.

Oversight is a process that requires continual re-examination and the ability to adjust to new circumstances as they arise. Although there are inherent risks in doing business in a country like Afghanistan, we work hard to ensure taxpayer dollars are adequately protected while carrying out a vital component of the U.S. Government's national security policy.

Afghanistan 2014 Elections: USAID's Role

A credible, transparent, and inclusive electoral process is central to the U.S. Government's transition strategy and critical to Afghan stability and democratic development. Afghanistan has made significant progress, with support from USAID, towards holding elections in April 2014: two key election laws were passed over the summer, marking the first time the Parliament directly approved the electoral process. Commissioners to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) have been appointed through a consultative process, and have proceeded to implement responsible plans for conducting polls for the April 5 vote. Candidates registered for the Presidential and Provincial Council elections in an orderly fashion, and the final candidate lists were prepared after complaints were addressed by the appropriate Afghan institutions. In short, there has been significant progress on multiple elements of the necessary electoral machinery, pointing toward a timely and credible election this spring.

USAID, in coordination with partners in the U.S. Government and the international community, remains focused on supporting an inclusive and democratic process by supporting Afghan electoral authorities and by building the capacity of democratic stakeholders in Afghanistan to participate in a robust and informed way. USAID is the lead donor to the IEC and IECC through

the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) ELECT II basket fund, which provides expert advice and mentoring to the IEC and funds key election procurement, training, and logistics. USAID is also funding IECC activities through the UNDP ELECT II basket fund. In addition to the electoral authorities, USAID supports independent domestic observers, civil society, media, and political parties, helping them appropriately engage in the democratic process.

USAID is supporting the participation of women in all aspects of the electoral process: promoting the hiring and training of female polling staff; promoting public outreach to women voters by civil society and public officials; and enhancing the ability of women candidates to campaign effectively.

Despite many existing and potential challenges, Afghans have demonstrated through every stage of the election planning process that they see a successful election as the only acceptable option to decide the leadership of their next government. The U.S Government, through USAID and other departments, is providing across-the-board support to help ensure this happens.

Conclusion

USAID always keeps in mind the enormous sacrifices made by Americans to build a secure and stable Afghanistan, and we fully understand the need for constant vigilance, particularly during this delicate transition period.

Throughout our efforts, we are applying important lessons from the past twelve years in Afghanistan, as well as from other high-risk environments in which USAID has worked. Weaning Afghanistan from unsustainable levels of assistance is necessary for us, and essential for them, and we are making tough decisions and prioritizing investments that have the greatest potential for long term sustainability. As USAID navigates through the 2014 transition period, we are committed to expending every effort to safeguard taxpayer funds and ensure that the remarkable development progress in Afghanistan is maintained and made durable.

Denying al Qaeda a chance to rebuild in Afghanistan remains America's primary mission in that country, and the programs implemented by USAID are essential elements to the success of that goal, particularly through the transition period.

It is an honor to be able to share with you today a small glimpse of what USAID is doing in that regard. I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

Chairman ROYCE. Well, thank you, Mr. Sampler.

Thank you for your good work, gentlemen, on all of these fronts.

But as you are pointing out, Mr. Sampler, about the steps that are being taken concerning the election, the reality is that in 2009 President Karzai had his hand in the fraud-plagued election. And the concern I think many of us have is, what is being done to make certain that we don't have a repeat in this?

We already hear some of his commentary about possibly postponing an election. All right? What steps are being taken to make certain that the international community has in place something that can stand up to his efforts to try to manipulate the election process? Should he try to do so again?

Ambassador DOBBINS. Well, I think both State and AID are working on this, so Larry may want to amplify. First of all, I would note that in 2009, although there was a great deal of fraud, there was also no doubt about who the winner was, since even if you disallowed for all of the fraud, Karzai was still 20 points ahead.

Chairman ROYCE. Well, that may be true. But the fact that he was willing to go in and—

Ambassador DOBBINS. No, I agree.

Chairman ROYCE [continuing]. Commit the fraud is what is concerning to me, because when this is over Afghans have to have some level of confidence, and they know what he tried to do last time.

Ambassador DOBBINS. No. I mean, that was prefatory to saying that it is more serious this time because the election is likely to be closer.

Chairman ROYCE. Right.

Ambassador DOBBINS. And it is important that the margin of victory not be smaller than the margin of fraud.

Now, I think we are reasonably satisfied that the election preparations data are much better than they were in 2009 or 2004. They are being undertaken in accordance with legislation rather than a Presidential decree.

Chairman ROYCE. Right.

Ambassador DOBBINS. The legislation has been fully followed with reasonable adherence to its provisions. The Electoral Commission seems to have a strong leadership, and so far has made decisions which are broadly accepted by most of the candidates as fair.

The international community, and the United States in particular, are continuing to follow this closely and render support in a number of sectors, and I think Larry can expand on that.

President Karzai has not said anything to date which would indicate any desire to postpone the election. Everything he said, privately and publicly, to us and to everybody else we know of is consistent with his desire to conclude this election on time and to leave office on schedule.

There is a lot of suspicion, as you say, based on earlier experiences. And in any new democracy that kind of suspicion is, in any case, endemic. But for the moment, we haven't seen any evidence of such—

Chairman ROYCE. This is encouraging. I did want to ask Larry Sampler about specifically, if I could, the election monitors, because I think that's one area where we are playing a pretty important

role. The security forces, the election monitors, particularly female officers, since that is necessary in this environment to sort of screen women voters as they come in. We want to make sure all women have the ability to vote in this situation, that all Afghans and young people have the ability to cue up and have their ballot cast. Give us a quick update on that front.

Mr. SAMPLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The U.S. is contributing about \$100 million to this election. Of that, roughly \$55 million is going into a UNDP basket fund to support the elections. That provides the technical assistance that will help the Afghan Independent Electoral Commission conduct the elections in a way that is as free and fair and independent of fraud as can be done.

The other \$45 million we are retaining and investing bilaterally in areas where we see particular need. Voting monitors and polling station monitors is one of those areas. Another is civil society engagement, particularly with respect to women's interest groups. And we are investing in technology that we really didn't have access to or we didn't have the sophistication to have access to in the last election.

And as an example, I spoke yesterday about SMS technology that women in Afghanistan are now using to collaborate and coordinate their approach to their candidates to make sure that they are getting their issues on the platforms of all the candidates. So there are both technological and technical assistance ways that we are investing our resources in support of the elections.

Certainly areas—there continue to be areas that concern us. One of them is the access of women to polling places. I was in Afghanistan a month ago, and each time I visit I go to the Independent Election Commission and get an update. They are aware of the problem, and they are working to fix it.

Now, I can't promise you that their solution will be robust in every district of Afghanistan, but to be honest, having been engaged there now for 12 years, I am just pleased to see that they have a methodological approach to how they are identifying these problems and pushing and addressing them.

They are putting money where the problems are. They are training women security, and they are training women polling place workers. And I think we will see an improvement—a dramatic improvement over 2009 in that regard.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. My time has expired. I am going to go to Mr. Ted Deutch of Florida.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Dumont, in a recent foreign affairs piece, former Ambassador to Afghanistan retired General Karl Eikenberry wrote that the counterinsurgency strategy failed in Afghanistan. Would you agree with his assertion that COIN was not successful in Afghanistan? And, if so, why didn't it work?

Mr. DUMONT. I would not agree with that, and the reason I say that is as we look at the gains that have been made to date in Afghanistan since we have arrived there, and with the support of 48 coalition nations, as well as the Afghan security forces, the strides made have been monumental. And I think it is too early for anybody to claim that a counterinsurgency effort has failed.

The ANSF has been consistent in taking the fight to the enemy through this fighting season. They have done remarkably well. They have adopted the training and tactics that have been provided to them and taught them. Their police are stepping up to the plate more and more each day. And, quite frankly, the most recent fighting season that they have had this past summer has given them confidence and skill that they have not had in the past.

They are certainly exceeding our expectations, and I continue that—I believe that will continue for the future. But to say that it is a failure I think is wrong.

Mr. DEUTCH. And, as you know, many of our constituents want us—and they expressed this very clearly—want us to bring home every last U.S. soldier. Every one. So when the Department of Defense recommends the size of a residual force going forward, what factors do you consider? And what will the mission of those forces that might remain in Afghanistan after 2014 be? And, finally, to the extent you wish to comment, how would you respond to so many Americans who just simply think that it is time to bring everyone home?

Mr. DUMONT. Sir, I understand the position of the American people, and I have served in combat myself on three occasions, including a year in Afghanistan. So I understand the concerns.

What I would say is is that our top priority is to prevent the return of al-Qaeda and any affiliated terrorist groups that can launch attacks on the United States from the country of Afghanistan. That is our first and foremost priority, and I think the American people understand that. I can assure you the American military understands that.

As far as what the mission will be after 2014, given a BSA and an invitation to remain in Afghanistan by the Afghan people, is a train, advise, and assist mission to assist the Afghan security forces in further developing and advancing their skills and their capabilities into the future, so that they can assist with providing their own security and ensure regional stability.

Like any emerging country, any emerging military force or police force, they will require training, assistance, and support generally as we provide with many other nations. But our mission after 2014 will be a train, advise, and assist mission, along with coalition partners, who will and have offered to remain there.

And as Ambassador Dobbins said, BSA will be critical to that, and the Afghans are fully aware of that.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you. And, Ambassador Dobbins, Mr. Sampler, if there were to be a negotiated settlement with the Taliban, do you believe that the Taliban would accept the provisions of the constitution? And, if so, would that be sufficient?

Ambassador DOBBINS. We have laid down three conditions for successful negotiation with the Taliban—that they accept the Afghan constitution, that they lay down their arms, and they break ties with al-Qaeda. And we would require all three of those for any solution that we would support.

I don't see early breakthroughs in the negotiations. In fact, I am not sure that we will even be negotiating in the next few months. We have made efforts in the past. We are consistent in support of a reconciliation process, but it takes two to tango. And the Taliban,

while they have been willing to talk to us, have not been willing to talk to the Afghan Government. And, frankly, it is the Afghans who have to negotiate peace.

So I don't predict early advances in this sphere. I would hope that there would be at least some procedural steps, but I can't promise it. Over the longer term, we do believe that reconciliation is the only way the war is going to end, and the quicker you start the faster you will get there, even if it is going to be a multi-year process.

Mr. DEUTCH. All right. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Deutch.

We go to Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

As I had mentioned, we had met with President Karzai, as all delegations do when they go over there, and in our delegation we raised the concerns about his neighbor, the Iranian regime, the threat that that poses to our interests in the region.

And Mr. Kennedy and Dr. Bera will probably agree that he dismissed the threat, that Iran poses no problem at all. "But Pakistan, that is the real threat to stability for Afghanistan," he said. So it shouldn't come as a big surprise that this past weekend Karzai and the leader of Iran, Rouhani, announced the agreement of a long-term strategic pact that ranges from political cooperation to economic and security partnerships, once again undermining and jeopardizing the U.S.-Afghanistan relationship.

What is Karzai's calculus here? Is he trying to hedge his bets by cozying up to Iran and being outwardly defiant to the U.S.? What is his thinking? If you could give us some insight into that.

And while in Afghanistan and during our hearings, I also expressed my concerns about the status of the counternarcotics operations in post-drawdown Afghanistan, and we have been talking about that this morning. We were told that due to lack of personnel, these U.S.-led counternarcotics operations will be severely limited in scope. The latest numbers indicate that this was a record year for poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, and this issue of counternarcotics operations is not getting the attention it rightfully deserves considering that terrorist activities are typically funded through narcotics.

If we can't conduct the kind of operations needed to reduce the poppy production, and if we don't have enough manpower now to fight this issue, what are we going to do next year and post-2014 to stop the illicit drug trade that generates over \$100 million a year for terrorist groups?

And I have been concerned that we are allowing the post-2014 residual force size also to be decided politically, and that is purely numbers-driven rather than focused on the task and what is needed. What is the mission that still needs to be accomplished in Afghanistan?

And, Mr. Dumont, you testified that a significant accomplishment since taking the lead is the Afghans have been increasingly able to maintain the gains made by our U.S. and coalition forces. And although that may be true now, what about in the post-withdrawal Afghanistan when they won't have quite a robust inter-

national force in support or possibly with no U.S. presence at all, if the President goes with the Zero Option? When the extremists no longer see us as an impediment to their goals and come against the Afghanistan forces in full force, will they be able to sustain those gains? What will happen?

When do you think that we will get that troop level number from the White House and the State Department? I will leave it open to all of you.

Thank you.

Ambassador DOBBINS. Thank you. Well, on Iran, as the chairman pointed out, Iran has provided arms and money to the Taliban. It has, however, provided a great deal of more money to the Afghan Government. It has quite substantial aid programs—most of them are quite benign—in Afghanistan.

Iran has, in general, a very bad relationship with the Taliban. It almost went to war with them well before we did. But it is hedging its bet, and it is hedging it largely as part of the competition with the United States rather than because it has an inherent positive interest in the Taliban.

Karzai has visited Iran once or twice a year since he became President 12 years ago, and so I don't attach a special importance to this particular visit. They haven't negotiated an agreement. They have simply announced an intention to negotiate an agreement. There is no agreement.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Ambassador DOBBINS. There is no draft on the——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Let me turn it over to the other two gentlemen.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. DUMONT. Ma'am, I would say, first and foremost, we do continue working with Afghan counternarcotics police. They have made significant strides in enhancing case management and prosecutions, including the ability to develop evidence, arrests, conduct trials, and imprison those convicted. They do demonstrate a determination to uphold rule of law, and they are increasingly resistant to the influences of corruption.

Several reasons for this, besides the training and assistance they get, they also know that the eyes of contributing nations and donor nations are on them, and they understand that it is important upon them, and incumbent upon them, to make changes. And they are making achievements in that regard.

We work with them also on developing good practices for sharing intelligence with the police forces, so that they can get at their narcotics trade and that they can make strides. But, again, it is a work in progress, and it will require them to assume some responsibility and ownership themselves based on some of the good practices and training that they have received from us and other coalition nations.

As far as the ANSF continuing to uphold the security gains that have been made and the future, the groundwork is there for the gains that they have made——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. DUMONT [continuing]. Both as an institution and as a force.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Sorry. Out of time. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Mr. Joseph Kennedy from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank all of the witnesses for testifying today. Thank you for your service.

I was fortunate enough, as former Chairman Ros-Lehtinen indicated, to visit Afghanistan several months ago and had an extraordinary visit to see the work of—your work and the work of many of the folks you support. So thank you very, very much for all that you do for our country.

I wanted to speak first, if I could, to Special Representative Dobbins. Mr. Ambassador, if you could focus just specifically a bit on one program that has come up in a number of meetings that I have had and that some constituents were concerned about about contractors and translators.

So those who have performed extraordinary service to our military and civilian corps both in Iraq and Afghanistan, and are now subject to death threats and violence for their affiliated work with us, these are programs both in Iraq and Afghanistan, my understanding is, that have—they have run into some fairly severe challenges. I believe under the—in 2008, under the NDAA, Congress created 25,000 visas for Iraqis who worked for the government at least for a year. Another I think 8,750 were created under the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, again, for our Afghan allies that worked for the United States in some capacity.

Can you give me an outline, sir, just to the best that you can, one, of how many Afghans are eligible for that program? How many have been processed to date? What that timeline is, and what that backlog might be, the causes to that backlog, and what we can do to try to help?

Ambassador DOBBINS. Thank you. I believe that we were slow in getting this process into gear, and for the first several years the number of applicants who successfully completed the process was fairly low.

Over the last year, however, this has significantly accelerated. In fact, I think the last year we had 10 times more successful completions than in the previous year. In fact, we are now approaching the legislative limit in the numbers available, and we are looking forward to working with Congress to extend our authority to bring in additional people.

Mr. KENNEDY. And how many more would you—

Ambassador DOBBINS. I think about 1,600 have been approved over the last year, if I remember the figures correctly.

Mr. KENNEDY. And how many more visas, sir, would you recommend, or would you be asking for help from Congress to—

Ambassador DOBBINS. I am not sure. I don't have the figures, but there is—in addition to the total number, I believe there is an annual number. And I believe that runs out in March or April, and we will need to work with Congress to get that extended because there will be additional people in the pipeline who would qualify.

Mr. KENNEDY. Okay. Thank you very, very much.

And, Mr. Dumont, I wanted to build a little bit off of the chairman's comments or Ms. Ros-Lehtinen's comments about the poppy

cultivation. When we were in Afghanistan, that was certainly something that—the point that was made over and over again. And I just wanted to see if you could outline—give any detail to enforcement strategy or a mechanism to try to get that trade under control.

Mr. DUMONT. We do have an interagency task force and an interagency coordination center that continue to provide intelligence support, training, and assistance to the counternarcotics police. They enable the Afghans to target narcotics traffickers and connections with insurgent groups. They go after the movements, communications, and financing involved, and groups involved in the drug trade.

They are also working to provide support for investigations and for military operations that identify people who are involved in the drug trade, getting at their financing, getting at their cultivation, getting at their movements, getting at the delivery of those illicit drugs.

Mr. KENNEDY. Thank you, sir. I am sorry to cut you off. Time is limited.

So, Mr. Sampler, if I could, there is obviously a piece to this which is an economic issue for the cultivation of the poppy from farmers that are choosing to cultivate poppy in terms of the economic income that they can generate from that. I would imagine that falls very much under USAID's auspices. Can you give a brief 30-second outline as a strategy there, and how you see that forecast going?

Mr. SAMPLER. Yes, certainly. I appreciate that you recognize that. The issue with counternarcotics is not one purely of enforcement. We have to provide alternate livelihoods.

USAID and the international donors writ large are working to create value chains for other crops that are either as profitable or even in some cases—saffron, for example—more profitable than poppy. The problem is it is a very, very harsh environment, and poppy is a very resilient crop. It doesn't—I mean, it does well in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, the traffickers do all of the heavy lifting for the growers. So until we can get the value changed for saffron, fruits, and nuts, up to the level of what the narcotraffickers have for poppy, this is going to be a difficult and a challenging environment for us.

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Kennedy. Mr. Kennedy, we want to recognize and thank you for you and Mr. Bera's trip there accompanying Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, both in terms of the oversight of this committee but also in visiting the troops in Afghanistan.

We want to also recognize Joe Wilson for his recent trip there, but also for his son's service in the U.S. Army in Afghanistan. Mr. Wilson, it is your time.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your interest in the security of Afghanistan, American security, even prior to 9/11. And people need to understand—and I want to thank each of you for the difference you are making—that indeed the attacks on our country September 11, 2001,

originated out of caves in Afghanistan. We should never forget that, and that is why I am really grateful for our military service.

I have had the opportunity—the USAID, I have seen the progress that has occurred. I have been there 12 times. My National Guard unit, former unit, served there, and led by Adjutant General Bob Livingston. It was the largest deployment of troops from South Carolina since World War II—1,600—and they really developed a great affinity for their Afghan brothers, so we saw that.

And then I appreciate the chairman referencing my youngest son. First Lieutenant Hunter Wilson returned last Thursday from his service this year in Afghanistan. So as I talk about military service, it is quite personal. We are very proud of the 122nd Engineer Battalion, South Carolina Army National Guard, for their service there.

I was particularly glad to see Representative Kennedy raise the issue of the special immigrant visas. I have had two sons serve in Iraq. They have actually cooperated in bringing their interpreters back to the United States for opportunity, for security. I am very grateful. I have had a nephew in the Air Force, Allen Heritage, served twice in Iraq.

So I know firsthand—and, indeed, again with my son serving in Afghanistan—how the interpreters, the civilians working with the American—and our allies—how important they are. And so I want to—I do want to work with you and I specifically hope that we will have an extension agreement or proposal, Ambassador, as soon as possible, so we can give hope to the people in that country and thank them.

I am also, though, concerned about Iranian weapons in Afghanistan. In August 2010, the Treasury Department sanctioned two Iranian Kuds Force officers for supplying funds or material to Afghan terrorists. That was just one example of Iran playing an active role in fueling the conflict in Afghanistan. What is the role that Iran is playing supporting the Afghan terrorists? What groups does Iran support, and why?

Ambassador DOBBINS. Well, as I said a little earlier, Iran supports both the government and the Taliban. Its dominant support is to the government and to largely benign aid programs, roads, and other things. But it does support—it has provided money and arms to the Taliban.

The arms and money flows across the Pakistani border are much more important than across the Iranian border, but, nevertheless, Iran is playing both sides of the house. It is doing that not out of a love for the Taliban. They hate the Taliban. It is doing it as part of the competition with the United States, and as an effort to demonstrate to the United States that they could play tough, too, if we got into some kind of military conflict with them.

So I think they are hedging their bet, and it is quite unhelpful, but it is not the totality of Iran's approach to Afghanistan, which with this very important exception has largely historically been quite coincident with our own. They were quite helpful in 2001, and, as I have said, they have had a significant and largely benign aid program for Afghanistan.

Mr. WILSON. Well, Mr. Ambassador, you give real meaning to diplomacy and so—trying to keep an even balance on these issues. I want to thank you for your service.

Ambassador DOBBINS. Thank you.

Mr. WILSON. And, additionally, I am concerned about Iran's sanction violations, that in January it was determined the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction that possibly there had been purchase of fuel for Afghan forces, in violation of the sanctions. Has that been stopped? And what can be done to make sure that the sanctions stay in place? Which have been so effective.

Ambassador DOBBINS. I am not familiar with the case. I assume this is a DoD purchasing issue, but I am afraid I can't give you a quick answer.

Mr. DUMONT. I am sorry, Mr. Wilson, I don't have that information either. I would have to take that back and get you a response.

Mr. WILSON. And that is very important, because we have seen the success of the sanctions bringing pressure on the Iranian regime, and I am still hopeful that in particular that the sanctions have the potential of encouraging a Green Revolution.

The young people of Iran deserve to have a better life than what they have now and what their prospects are, and so the sanctions have multiple purposes, but one is to truly assist a positive change in Iran.

Thank you very much for your service.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We go now to Mr. Eliot Engel of New York.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and let me thank our witnesses, very distinguished witnesses, for coming. Thank you for being here, and the three of you have what I consider to be some of the most complex and thankless jobs in the U.S. Government. And all of us appreciate your service very, very much.

I share the frustration of my colleagues about the games that President Karzai has been playing. He ought to sign the BSA and stop the nonsense. I just want to stay that.

Let me ask Ambassador Dobbins, and then perhaps Mr. Sampler can comment, much of the resource planning for post-2014 is happening in the field. But I would like to know what State and USAID here in Washington—how you are doing similar planning.

What is the timeline in which the Afghanistan and Pakistan offices at State and USAID are going to return to the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs and Asia Bureau? And how are State and AID planning to address the new resource environment and the personnel changes that will occur with these transitions?

Ambassador DOBBINS. I wouldn't say at this point we have a firm plan. There is a general intention to look at the current bureaucratic arrangement in the State Department in light of the transition at the end of 2014 when we will move from a combat operation to a train, advise, and assist operation with a much lower number of troops.

I think even then Afghanistan is likely to remain difficult enough, tricky enough, and important enough to the United States that you are going to want more than just a desk officer handling it. But I think there probably could at that point be a closer asso-

ciation with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, and we probably would move to some such arrangement.

But it is—I think the actual transition is not very complex to make. It is simply changing some lines on—you know, on an organization chart. It is not as if people are going to have to be fired or recruited. So the fact that we haven't made a decision now a year and some months off doesn't mean we won't be able to make a timely decision.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. SAMPLER. Ranking Member, the only thing I would add is that I think at USAID the bureaucratic changes will be driven by the effects we want to achieve in the agency. My two missions are the largest missions by an order of magnitude that the agency has anywhere in the world. So even if we were folded back into the Bureau, it would have to receive particular and unique attention.

You asked what we do here in Washington to help the field team work on their resource allocation, and I think the single greatest value that we add is engaging the communities of interest here, whether it be your staff or members themselves, the diaspora community, the think-tank community. We get an awful lot of valuable input and a refining of our ideas by engaging in Washington and in supporting the field in that regard.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Ambassador, let me ask you this, a key element of the economic transition in Afghanistan is obviously regional trade, and a key barrier to getting Afghan goods to market is the barrier that exists between Pakistan and India, so that most Afghan goods wanting to get to Indian markets go through Iran.

I know that India provided Pakistan with most favored nation trading status back in 1996. Could you provide an update on where the Pakistani announcement of giving India trade status currently stands, and a more general vision of the role connectivity in the region can have on stabilizing Afghanistan?

Ambassador DOBBINS. Well, we have raised this with the Government of Pakistan on several occasions, and, indeed, with the Government of India—specifically, the grant of most favored nations. It came up while Prime Minister Sharif was here in Washington during a visit a month ago.

The Pakistanis have indicated their intention is to provide—is to grant MFN to India. The question is one of timing. We, of course, have urged it to be done as quickly as possible.

I think—they didn't say so, but I think they may be waiting until a new Indian Government takes office. They probably want to do this in the part of a context of other improvements in the relationship.

The Pakistani Government, under the new Prime Minister, has reached out and tried to improve that relationship. The Indians, for good, historical reasons, are approaching this very cautiously. They take the Prime Minister—they believe that the Prime Minister is acting in good faith, but they are a little skeptical he can deliver on some of the things that they need if the relationship is going to progress.

MFN for India would be a positive step, and, indeed, a general opening of the border to more commerce would also be very helpful

for Afghanistan, as you have indicated. And for all of those reasons, we continue to support it.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Mr. Jeff Duncan of South Carolina.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I would like to just take a few minutes to point out some of the taxpayer dollars that have been sent to Afghanistan and spent almost wastefully. And I would like to put an article from Bloomberg News in the record about planes parked in the weeds in Kabul after \$486 million were spent. These are G-222 aircraft, some of which are sitting in the weeds, not being used. Those are taxpayer dollars that were spent to purchase those.

We also spent somewhere between \$25 million and \$36 million on a 64,000 square foot unoccupied building in Camp Leatherneck, which in May 2010 the Commanding General, General Mills, recommended cancellation of the construction, and that was overridden by his superiors. And then, in May 2013, the building still sitting, not used, the Army Regulation 15-6 investigation said we ought to convert that building to a gymnasium and spend more money converting it to a movie theater. That was overridden. The building is still sitting unoccupied. Thank goodness we didn't spend any more money.

Two hundred thirty million dollars in spare parts in an inventory warehouse—there was no good inventory or accountability for those spare parts—these are vehicle parts—and an additional \$13 million in spare parts were ordered just in October 2013.

I want to commend the work of Congressman Jason Chaffetz of the Oversight Committee who has been working with the Special Investigator of Afghan Reconstruction, or the SIGAR. He has identified fuel usage and waste and theft in Afghanistan. He has talked about the expenses of the hospital in Kabul where U.S. tax dollars have been wastefully spent. We could go into the Bank of Kabul fiasco and allocation of dollars there, but infrastructure projects that are all over Afghanistan and there is no oversight. These are in areas that are inaccessible to civilian employees.

And I would like to point out—and I know the panelists are aware of this—but this is the Afghan oversight access in 2009. The shaded areas are areas that civilian contractors or U.S. employees had access to in 2009 to do oversight on U.S. taxpayer dollars being spent.

If I flip over to the projected 2014 oversight areas, you will notice a stark contrast. I know it is difficult to see, but these gentlemen are aware of this. There are just little dots there. These are areas that U.S. inspectors did not have access to for oversight. These are U.S. taxpayer dollars. How much more money are we going to continue to spend in Afghanistan without proper oversight? And that is really what it is about.

So I don't have any questions along those. I could go through a lot of other examples, but I think the American taxpayers that are watching understand that their tax dollars are being spent without a lot of oversight on the part of their government.

So I would like to shift gears to Ambassador Dobbins. I think that is who I would address this to. But I am interested in the Spe-

cial Immigrant Visa Program and the delays that are going on there, because Congress has recognized the unique dangers faced by Iraqi and Afghan civilians who worked on behalf of the U.S. Government by creating programs for these individuals to become lawful permanent residents here in the U.S.

I have had an example of a gentleman I met in the Kandahar—excuse me, yeah, the Kandahar region of Afghanistan about 2 years ago. He was embedded with the military there, had acted as a translator, had taken up weapons to help defend the colleagues of the unit he was working with, and he was definitely threatened by the Taliban. His uncle was killed, other family members were threatened, and went through a 2-year process where officers from the unit that he was embedded with, other folks that knew this gentleman vouched for his service to America there in Afghanistan, but yet it took over 2 years.

He was actually issued a visa by the State Department, and then it was revoked right before he left, and he had to go through months of trying to understand why it was revoked, and then it was reissued. I think it was reissued only after Congress got involved questioning why, but—so I ask, why have there been so many delays in the Afghan SIVs, Ambassador? And I am assuming you are the right one to ask that question.

Ambassador DOBBINS. No, I think that is right, sir. I think we have—we were slow in the early years to implement this program. Over the last year, however, it has accelerated significantly. I think there were 10 times more visas issued this year than there were a year ago. And, in fact, we are approaching the limit of the program. We will run out of numbers shortly, and we will want to work with Congress for an extension of the program, since there will be additional people who will qualify if we have additional numbers.

On specific cases, I mean, we have to determine that they did work for the U.S. military. We have to determine that they are under threat. That depends in part on where they live, and there are other security-related concerns. I can't explain any particular case. I know the case that you are referring to. And within I think 2 or 3 weeks, maybe even less, of the visa denial it was then re-issued, as you indicated.

Mr. DUNCAN. And I appreciate the assistance on that, and got the gentleman here.

Mr. Chairman, I did want to put this in the record, and I would—

Chairman ROYCE. Without objection.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. We go to Mr. Ami Bera of California.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the witnesses.

As has been mentioned previously, I had the opportunity over Memorial Day to visit Afghanistan with Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen as well as my colleague, Mr. Kennedy. When we were there, we met some of the most remarkable young men and women in our troops, and, you know, I really do want to praise our troops for meeting every mission and, you know, for the wonderful job that they have done.

We also had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Karzai, and in that meeting—this was back in May, you know, he unequivocally expressed a desire to get a BSA done fairly quickly and, at the same time, unequivocally said, you know, he has no desire to, you know, stand for election again and wanted to see the elections that are coming up in 2014 take place without any interference.

Given that the Loya Jirga has supported the BSA and now Mr. Karzai is backtracking, you know, I would make the observation that this is—he happens to be someone who we have to negotiate with, but he is not someone that I would call an honest broker and an easy one to negotiate with.

I also had the opportunity to visit India and chat with our allies in India, who have made significant investments in Afghanistan, over \$2 billion in investments in infrastructure and projects like the Salma Dam. And others also have had the opportunity to meet with business groups like CII and FICCI, and major Indian multinationals like the Tata Group and the Mahindra Group, that are interested in making investments and helping fill the void that will occur regardless of whether there is a BSA or not as we start to drawdown and drawdown our own investments.

Their major concern, though, is the security situation there. In addition, as I have met with the Indian Government, Indian dignitaries, there is also a very real concern that hardened, trained Jihadi fighters will start shifting over to the India and Pakistan border, where we are already seeing a flareup, and, you know, increasing incidence.

Given that—and maybe this is a question for Ambassador Dobbins—what can we do working with India to, one, you know, continue to maintain an economic structure in Afghanistan? You know, again, I do worry about as we drawdown, significant economic resources are going to come with that, as well as working with India on the India and Pakistan border as some of these fighters shift over. I am not sure Pakistan has control over these fighters either.

So, you know, Ambassador Dobbins, your perspective?

Ambassador DOBBINS. Well, we do work closely with India on Afghan issues. I met with the Indian Foreign Secretary yesterday on this, for instance. President Karzai is visiting India later this week for a state visit, in fact.

India has a significant aid program and significant investments. To the extent—probably the greatest contribution India could make, and Pakistan can make, in Afghanistan is improving their bilateral relationship. Improved relationships between India and Pakistan will have two effects on Afghanistan. One effect is it will greatly increase the access of Afghan trade to India via Pakistan, but, secondly, and equally important, it will reduce the competition between the two countries for influence in Afghanistan in a way that has often proved highly destabilizing.

So we have been encouraging both Afghanistan—I am sorry, both Pakistan and India to overcome their differences in Kashmir, their differences over Afghanistan. And, you know, I think there is some hope with the new Pakistani Government—of course, the Indians have elections shortly—but it is an area that we are continuing to press.

I don't think that there is any near-term danger of foreign fighters shifting from Afghanistan to the border with India, among other things because unfortunately the war in Afghanistan isn't over. But the Indian concerns are legitimate, and it is something that we do need to be careful about.

Mr. BERA. Do you sense in your conversations with the Pakistani Government that there—I sense that the Indian Government certainly does want to see improved relationships with Pakistan as a mechanism of stabilizing South Asia as well. Do you sense that same, you know, desire from the Pakistani side?

Ambassador DOBBINS. I do, and I think the Indians do as regards the new Prime Minister and his civilian leadership. Now, in Pakistan traditionally the security sphere has been left largely to the military, and they have been largely free of civilian oversight or control. The last time Nawaz Sharif tried to exercise that kind of control he was overthrown by General Musharraf, so he has to be careful about how quickly he moves to assert civilian control to their military and a stronger civilian role in designing and implementing Pakistan's national security policy.

I think the Indians—he has expressed himself very clearly that Pakistan can't be secure unless Afghanistan is at peace and relations with India are improved. And he has tried to move in both directions.

I think the Indian Government takes him at face value and believes he is sincere. They are a little skeptical that he will prevail in exercising enough influence over the Pakistani military, and we will just have to wait and see. But we give him a fair chance of being able to do so, among other things because the Pakistani military now realize that their biggest threat is internal, and they realize that they need the political leadership to take responsibility for the kinds of sometimes harsh measures that will be needed to deal with that internal threat.

Mr. BERA. Okay. Great. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. We now go to Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, who served as an Air Force pilot in Afghanistan and also served with Special Operations.

Mr. KINZINGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you all for being here. Appreciate your service and taking the time with us.

As the chairman mentioned in his opening remarks, I just came back from Afghanistan. Actually, we did Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistan is quite a complicated relationship and one that I expect will probably continue to be complicated.

But, Ambassador, as you alluded to, I believe and I hope that the Pakistanis are actually starting to understand that the Taliban is actually their problem, too, and it is no longer a tool they can use to posture against India or whatever went into that whole I guess calculus there.

The one point I want to make from this is the people of Afghanistan, there is a message that has not gotten out to the United States. The people of Afghanistan are good people. The people of Afghanistan want to live in freedom. The Taliban's approval rating in Afghanistan is something like 10 percent, slightly higher than Congress, but it is still about 10 percent, which means the Taliban are not popular in Afghanistan.

This is a message that I don't think has gotten out, and then Karzai is posturing to do whatever it is he calculates he wants to do. We met with him as well, and I have got to tell you, I got a very different view coming out of the meeting one on one with Karzai than what I have seen in the media and what he is spouting. I see a man who said, "Hey, we want the United States to be here. We want a long-term relationship." And then for whatever domestic consumption he thinks he is doing he is actually doing more harm than I think he realizes. But they are good folks.

And I am hoping that, you know, we learned our lessons from the complete withdrawal from Iraq, which was a terrible mistake, and I think is being shown all over the world as a terrible mistake, and I hope that we continue to press ahead with getting this BSA done and having a long-term commitment.

A couple of quick points I want to make. As I mentioned, the Americans don't see the success in Afghanistan. I think Americans still think there is 150,000 troops that are marching up and down the hill, engaging in the Taliban, and we are taking the brunt of the casualties. The Afghan military is actually losing about 100 soldiers a week.

They are taking the fight to the Taliban when they find themselves engaged. They don't have the air support that the American military has, but they are fighting very bravely. It is a completely different situation than what we saw even 2 years ago.

Secondly, so that is what Americans think. My concern—I just want to put this on the record. I can't think of the last time I saw the President of the United States tell the American people why we are in Afghanistan. I can't do that. Now, I believe we are in Afghanistan for good reason. I believe us remaining engaged in Afghanistan post-2014 is important. I can't remember the last time I have heard the President say that.

The President recently, fairly recently, went to Afghanistan and did not meet with President Karzai. I thought that was an oversight. So there is things along that line.

But let me get now to my questions. We are looking at a residual force, from what I am understanding, 9,000 to 10,000 American troops and a few more NATO troops in that process. What was General Allen's recommendation in terms of a residual force? Mr. Dumont, maybe you can answer that, or whoever.

Mr. DUMONT. I am sorry, Congressman. I don't have that number off the top of my head.

Mr. KINZINGER. Do any of you three know what General Allen recommended? Because I believe it was somewhere around 15,000 to 20,000 American troops post-2014. I say that to say I am concerned that we are going to undershoot the amount of troops we have available in Afghanistan to do both counterterrorism and support, both in building the Afghan establishment and government and then also in supporting their troops engaged in the field.

I think it would be very unfortunate for 20 years from now for us to read the history books and say that America was 5,000 troops short of actually being successful in Afghanistan.

We visited the prison, Parwan prison, in Afghanistan, and we visited—there is I think right now 59 TCNs in prison. Mr. Ambassador, do you have any idea like, what are we going to do with

these TCNs that we continue to have? The Afghans obviously don't want them. I wouldn't either. And now we have to figure out, what are we going to do with them as we reach the post-2014? Are any of you guys familiar with that situation and have any ideas for what we do?

Ambassador DOBBINS. Well, in general, we are going to have to do something with them by the end of 2014. Some of them will be turned over to the Afghans. Some of them will be returned to the country of origin when those countries undertake to deal with them appropriately.

Mr. KINZINGER. Let me ask one more question, just because my time is running out. So now we are into this kind of reduction posture. In fact, I think the vast majority of American forces are now focused on withdrawing instead of necessarily taking the fight to the enemy. It is unfortunate, but how do you think the offensive went against Haqqani?

Do you believe it was completed, or do you believe we are leaving too quickly to finish that fight against the Haqqani network? Mr. Sampler, let us start with you.

Mr. SAMPLER. Thank you. I really don't have an opinion on the Haqqani network. I mean, I have worked in Afghanistan since 2002. They have been there decades before that, so—but I don't have any opinion on the—

Mr. KINZINGER. It would be nice if they were gone, though, wouldn't it?

Mr. SAMPLER. It would, Congressman. It would.

Mr. KINZINGER. Mr. Dumont, do you have any thoughts on Haqqani?

Mr. DUMONT. It is something, obviously, that we take seriously and that we follow and track closely and fight against each day. And it is something we remain focused on because it is serious to us.

Mr. KINZINGER. Thank you.

Mr. DUMONT. And the Afghans understand that as well.

Mr. KINZINGER. Thank you. Well, thank you all for being here.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. We go now to Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii who served as an Army officer in Iraq.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. Aloha. Thanks for being here, and thanks for your hard work and your service, each of you.

You know, we have seen different opinions and different perspectives here today through the committee on the issues in Afghanistan. I think these conversations reflect the conversations that we hear when we go back to our districts, that we hear in the public, about why there is an overwhelming public sentiment to bring all of our troops home, is that there seems to be a lack of a clear definition on what our mission is.

What is the end state that our troops are trying to accomplish or that we are trying to accomplish there? Who is the enemy that threatens the United States in Afghanistan that our troops are fighting against? And when we say we need to accomplish the mission, what does that even mean? What does that look like?

You know, when we look back to why we went there in the first place, Osama bin Laden is no longer a threat. Al-Qaeda has largely been decimated in Afghanistan. We see now, of course, pockets and threats coming from other countries and other regions from these terrorist networks. And we have also seen that because al-Qaeda has no allegiance to a specific flag or country that our best and most efficient way to deal with this threat is through some of the quick strike forces that we have successfully used in the past with some of these areas.

You know, when we look at stability, people have talked often about stability in Afghanistan as being an end state. We have given many tools, training, infrastructure, to the Afghan people, the Afghan forces in order to attain this end state, but we also talk about the corruption, the other challenges that exist within the country, the tribal influences, which really lead us to understanding that this stability at the end can only be achieved by the Afghan people.

So I have got three questions that follow kind of this structure. First is, with the bilateral security agreement, what are the next steps at this point, given what Karzai has said and his posturing in not looking at this until after the Afghan elections, and how long do we wait for him to make up his mind on what he wants to do?

If eventually the bilateral security agreement is completed and agreed to, the remaining forces that are being projected to stay in Afghanistan have two missions or two purposes from what I have seen, and that is to train and assist and also a counterterrorism element. I am wondering what percentage of that projected—how those troops are broken up between those two missions.

And, lastly, with that contingent that is left in Afghanistan, I think the BSA has kind of a 10-year timeline. What is the timeline for our U.S. presence there in Afghanistan? Is it a timeline? And if it is not a timeline, is it an end state that we are trying to achieve and say, "Once this is achieved, then there will be no presence."

So, Ambassador Dobbins, if you could start really on the next steps of the BSA, and then, Mr. Dumont, talk a little bit about our forces there.

Ambassador DOBBINS. Okay. Well, we are there to prevent Afghanistan from again becoming a country with a government that supports al-Qaeda and allows it free reign within that country, something the Taliban did and which they would do again if they came back to power.

We believe that concluding the BSA as soon as possible is necessary to sustain the large, broad, 70-nation coalition that supports Afghanistan. We believe it will begin to fragment, and we believe the Afghan people will become increasingly anxious the longer this goes on. But we haven't, at this point, set a date beyond which we are no longer prepared to wait. We simply believe there is a big cost in waiting, and it is a cost going to be paid for by the Afghan people.

I will let Mr. Dumont comment on the relationship between the training assistant and CT elements in terms of the timeline. The assumption is that this is going to be a declining presence over time, that whatever decision is made for 2015 will be again re-

viewed in the course of 2015, with the hope that the number can be reduced in 2016, et cetera.

The objective over time is an Afghanistan that is capable of securing its territory and its population without more than the normal level of external assistance that countries at that level of development receive around the world.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you.

Mr. Dumont, quickly.

Mr. DUMONT. Yes, ma'am. As you know, the train, advise, and assist NATO mission is to assist the Afghans to become a capable force, reliable CT partner, so that we don't have to do the CT, and that will take place over time. There will be a combined effort for sometime, I imagine.

The percentage of who will do what I don't believe has been worked out yet. It will remain to be seen how quickly the Afghans can assume more control for the CT fight in their own country, and how much assistance and support they will require from donor nations.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We go now to Mr. Ted Yoho of Florida.

Mr. YOH0. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen. Appreciate you being here.

I want to build on some of the statements made by my colleague from Hawaii and Mr. Duncan in the regards of the money being spent, how much money we have spent. You were talking about \$100 million for elections, and another \$45 million for equipment for elections. And with what Ms. Gabbard was saying, what is the end game? I mean, what are we hoping for? That they will have a stable government, one that is not wrought with fraud, waste, and abuse? And that will run a country that we can be good allies with and trading partners?

Mr. Sampler, if you would, define the end game. I mean, what is our—what are we looking to gain? I mean, for success, what would you say that is?

Mr. SAMPLER. There is two questions, and the larger end game I will yield to Ambassador Dobbins for. That is a policy question. With respect to the \$100 million on elections, of which \$45 million is the bilateral part, what we are hoping for is an election that the Afghans are happy with.

I mean, our goal—I get asked the question quite often, what are we doing in Afghanistan? And the answer that I use as my own, it is not government policy, but it is a secure, stable, and democratic Afghanistan that governs this population justly and secures its geographic space.

Mr. YOH0. Okay.

Mr. SAMPLER. We don't want to have to go back.

Mr. YOH0. Let me stop you there. How much effective is that—the ANSF right now? I mean, are they more effective? Are they standing up and—do they own the security and the—it is like they are fighting—they know it is their responsibility?

Mr. DUMONT. Yes, sir, they do. We have transitioned security to them. They are in the lead. They are taking the majority of casual-

ties, and I venture to say close to 90 percent of the operations the military is conducting are Afghan-led, Afghan-directed, Afghan-planned.

In some others, for unilateral CT missions that we do, it is also in conjunction with them. They do have a presence on it. They are involved in the planning. But they are doing the majority of the fighting and taking the majority of the casualties.

Mr. YOHO. How much of that effectiveness is based on us being there and our presence there?

Mr. DUMONT. Well, to get them to the point that they are at, it has been a long-term effort obviously.

Mr. YOHO. Correct.

Mr. DUMONT. Now we are providing, depending on the level of the unit—for instance, there are counterterrorism forces. We provide very little assistance. We have a presence there, but they are skilled, they are capable, and they are taking the fight to the insurgent threat. And their regular ANSF forces, the conventional forces, are making strides every day and making great progress. We do have an advising mission with them, but they are in the lead.

Mr. YOHO. Okay. Are we looking at some point at being able to pull out altogether? Is this going to be another permanent U.S. military base around the world that we have?

Mr. DUMONT. I don't envision a permanent presence as you speak about. I think what it will depend on is how well progress is made, how well stability in Afghanistan is in effect over time, and how well regional stability is in effect also.

I think it will be a long-term sort of focused effort that will take review over a period of time to assess how well things are progressing and what the enduring threat is to the United States, if any.

Mr. YOHO. All right. And going back to you, Mr. Sampler, you were saying that the infrastructure is built up and, you know, a lot more women are voting, a lot more women are in colleges and school, and that is a good thing. Is that going to be sustainable without our presence there? Is that something they believe in philosophically? Or is it just an ideological feeling—or not an ideological feeling but an ideal of ours that we are instilling upon them in a Muslim country that they won't maintain after we leave?

Mr. SAMPLER. Congressman, that is a great question. It is not an issue of Islam; it is more an issue of Afghan society. And it is something that they are adapting as their own, and that is the only way that we will be resilient, is if they make it their own philosophy. Increasingly—

Mr. YOHO. Without our presence, though.

Mr. SAMPLER. Without our presence. I mean, the Afghans appreciate what we have done for them, but the Afghans themselves want us to—want to reach a point where they are self-sufficient and self-sustaining. Not all Afghans see it this way yet, but that is the progress that we are making.

Mr. YOHO. Okay. And, you know, we have talked about the poppy fields, how we need to change the farmers and the whole production mechanism so there is a more profitable crop and get away from \$100 million in poppies, yet we are giving \$100 million for

elections. And we have talked about that for 25, 30 years. I mean, it goes back to 1992, I mean, even before that. That is just a way of life. Is that really realistic, that we can change that without just changing the whole dynamics over there as far as the government and the structure and all of that, and, you know, Western ideologies?

Mr. SAMPLER. Congressman, I hate to speak in generalities, but most Afghan farmers don't choose to grow poppies because they want to. They would rather grow food. It is just not profitable, and it is just not sustainable. So our job at USAID is to make it possible for them to make a living off of non-criminal activities.

Mr. YOHO. I appreciate your input. Thank you. I am out.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We now go to Lois Frankel of Florida. Representative Frankel's son served in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Ms. FRANKEL. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I did have the privilege of visiting our troops in Afghanistan, and our folks from USAID, with Mr. Wilson. And I am glad his son has returned home safely, as has mine. And my son also served in USAID. He went back after the Marines and went back to Afghanistan.

So I thank you all for your service. I am grateful for his service and everybody's service, but I still have to say that I remain skeptical of the money we are spending there and the waste and the fraud and all of that.

But with that said, I do have a number of questions.

First of all, you talked about education, and it is heartening to hear about the advancement in education. But specifically I would like—you know, there is a saying that—I don't know who I am quoting, but "A great teacher under a tree is better than an ignorant one in a new American-built school."

So my first question is, what are the metrics that we are using in terms to assess whether there is success? Is it—are these test scores? Is it secular courses? Is there any anti-West propaganda being taught? I mean, what is the metric used?

And if the agreement is reached, and we do stay there, do you feel that you have a good understanding among all the agencies which groups are significant threats to the United States and which have goals that are only local? And in terms of the various programs, are we going to see the State Department lead on diplomacy, USAID on development, IC on intelligence? Or will the military continue to drive those lanes?

Those are my basic questions. And if you have time, I would like to hear also the answer again from some of the others—I think Ambassador Dobbins did answer—why we should stay. I would like to hear the other gentlemen's response to that.

Ambassador DOBBINS. Do you want to start on the education, Larry?

Mr. SAMPLER. Yes, sure. On the education, you know, we can measure outputs our outcomes, and I am very much a proponent of measuring desirable outcomes. And one of the most positive things I think in Afghanistan in the recent years is the figure I cited in my testimony. Of Afghans entering higher education, 20 percent are women. That would be unthinkable even a decade ago, because there were no women who had primary or secondary edu-

cations. And that is a sustainable achievement. Those women won't be rolled back to burkas, they won't be put back in the back corner of a compound.

So in terms of outcomes, that is one of the metrics.

Ms. FRANKEL. Excuse me. But you—but what are they learning? I am asking you, do you know when they get through the system what they have learned?

Mr. SAMPLER. Yes. Afghanistan has entrance exams for their universities. I am not familiar with what they are. I have been told by others that they are comparable to other universities in the region, but I can get more information on that if you would like.

Ambassador DOBBINS. Let me just add one point on this, which is twice as many Afghans can read and write today as could 10 years ago. And that number will go up to three times as many 10 years from now if the kids in school now stay in school. So at a basic level, literacy is the outcome.

Mr. SAMPLER. Your other question in terms of anti-Western bias and their education, USAID did a \$27 million contract with the Ministry of Education to purchase textbooks. And we did have the right to refuse it. They were Afghan textbooks. They designed the curriculum. We didn't interfere in that, but we were satisfied that it was not prejudicial to the United States or the West.

Ambassador DOBBINS. Do you want to say something about why we are there?

Mr. SAMPLER. Yes, ma'am. I appreciate the question of why we are there. I mean, I think this is something that all of the Foreign Service officers have to deal with. Why am I leaving my family and going to do this?

I am struck, given my military time, that we can do this right or we can do it again. And our hope is that we will be able to create and support a secure, stable, and democratic Afghanistan that governs its population justly and secures its geographical space.

I use that quite often with new Foreign Service officers going out, and it captures most of what I think are the reasons that we are there.

Mr. DUMONT. And, ma'am, with respect to the groups that we know are a threat to the U.S., and ones that are local, while we have those identified, there is no guarantee that the ones who are focused on local activities will not merge and compile resources and personnel to attack ourselves or other coalition nations. And that is of concern is that because some of these groups they affiliate and they have far-reaching effect than it was ever intended, and we are mindful of that.

Ms. FRANKEL. What about driving the various programs? Can somebody answer that?

Ambassador DOBBINS. Yes. I mean, I think, you know, to be fair, I think that there is a division of labor between Defense, State, AID, and the intelligence community at the moment that is pretty clear. The collaboration—I have been in every administration since Lyndon Johnson's, and I think the collaboration among agencies is pretty straightforward and pretty amicable and as good as any administration I have seen.

I don't see DoD rolling over the other agencies. I think they are—on the diplomatic side, they are quite a differential to the State De-

partment, and of course we are to them on the military operations side.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We go now to Mr. Dana Rohrabacher of California.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know where to begin here. How much are we spending annually in Afghanistan now? How much is the cost to the American taxpayer? Anybody know?

Ambassador DOBBINS. I mean, I think each of us have somewhat different budgets there. The total budget I——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Yes. What would be the—nobody knows the total budget of what we are spending in Afghanistan? It is a hearing on Afghanistan. Can I have an estimate?

Ambassador DOBBINS. I am sorry, Congressman. I can't give you——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Well, I will just have to say that it is disheartening to have a briefing from our Government people who are involved in a project and they can't tell me how much we are spending annually in——

Ambassador DOBBINS. It isn't a matter of——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay. How many killed and wounded have we suffered in the last 12 months? Mr. Dumont, would you know that?

Mr. DUMONT. Sir, I do not. I will have to get back with you on that one also.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. We don't know what the cost is, and we don't even know how many killed and wounded there are, and we are supposed to believe that you fellows have a plan that is going to end up in a positive way in Afghanistan? Holy cow.

Ambassador DOBBINS. We do know that the number of Afghan soldiers and police killed is 30 times the number of——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. You know what? I will have to tell you something. I am more interested in knowing how many Americans have been killed, because the Afghans have been killing themselves for centuries.

And, you know, my father fought in Korea. And I remember when he told me, he said, "Dana, all of our units—these young men who were with me out fighting in Korea, they would never have believed that we would be there after 50 years." They have—not one of those guys who went to Korea to try to stop the Communist takeover would have believed that that meant that we would have been committed for 50 years.

Okay. We don't know how many are killed and wounded. We don't know what the cost is. So what will be the cost—you are presenting a plan now. What will be the cost to the United States per year annually after your plan is applied to Afghanistan, if they accept it?

Ambassador DOBBINS. Well, we haven't defined force levels there. I think the rough figure is probably about \$1 million per soldier, so you could work out——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And how many soldiers are we asking them, pleading with them, to let us send our boys into harms way? How

much—how many soldiers is the plan to continue with our presence?

Ambassador DOBBINS. The President hasn't made that decision yet.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Is there a proposal to Karzai on that?

Ambassador DOBBINS. No. And Karzai—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I heard the number 14,000. Is that out of the ballpark?

Ambassador DOBBINS. If you are talking about a U.S.-NATO, everybody together, figure, that would still probably be somewhat high. Karzai in fact has expressed no interest in the size of the residual presence.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. You know, yesterday the Secretary of State was here, and he was telling me different things of why—what we can't do to make the mullahs mad. Of course, he wasn't putting it that way. But when I suggested that there was groveling going on, I think we are groveling again.

Maybe this is the grovel administration. We are groveling to Karzai. I know Karzai. I have known him for 20 years. And we don't—and to suggest he—his family, we all know what his family has done. They have become filthy rich and we are dealing with a group there now centered around the Karzai clique. I mean, drug dealing, skimming of U.S. aid, cronyism at its worst, and we are dealing with Pakistan in order to make sure we have a presence there and where—meaning in Afghanistan, and the Pakistanis are doing what—we know the Pakistanis are behind the ISI, who they are financing. We know that they spend money that they end up getting from us to kill American soldiers. This is insanity.

And then we have people who want to stay longer? It is time for us to get our butts out of that country. Maybe not for their sake, for our sake. We don't even care enough to know how much it is costing or how many killed and wounded that we suffered. That should be right on the tip of your tongue, because that is a cost to everybody's kid. I mean, everybody who has got a son there has to know that we—our number one priority is that person who we sent over there, we care about him enough.

But we have some other agenda in Afghanistan. I don't see what we are going to accomplish. And we are asking what the goals are, if you believe that that is accomplishable in Afghanistan, I have got a bridge to sell you in California.

Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Gerry Connolly of Virginia.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, let me just say I do think—I say to the panel, Mr. Rohrabacher is right. How you can come to a congressional oversight hearing on this subject, with your titles, and not know how much we are spending every year, and not know how many casualties we incur every year, or this last year, I will say to the chairman of this committee is actually a stunning, stunning development. I have been involved in foreign policy hearings and oversight for a long time. Like that wouldn't be a question on the tip of one's tongue? But put that aside.

Mr. Sampler, what is going to happen to the oversight of AID's projects in Afghanistan post-2014? Are you going to have to—is

AID going to have to pull back from whole geographic chunks of Afghanistan for want of security?

Mr. SAMPLER. Congressman, thank you for the question. We hope not, but hope is not a plan. In most countries that we work in around the world, we rely on host national security forces to provide areas that are secure enough for us to work. But there is a range from what I would call regular aid missions where that is the case to Afghanistan, and then in between we have places like Pakistan, Colombia, South Sudan, Yemen, where we have to come up with creative measures to balance normal operations against conflict operations.

In Afghanistan post-2014, we have got programs scattered around the country. Some we will be able to continue to operate; some may have to be adjusted. It will depend on the security situation in the specific micro-area as opposed to the countrywide—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Are there parts of Afghanistan where you are operating now that absent something happening you have to plan for withdrawal or significant curtailment because of want of security? That clearly the Taliban is going to reassert itself in certain sectors of Afghanistan?

Mr. SAMPLER. Congressman, I can't name a specific area, but categorically I think there certainly must be. There will be some place in Afghanistan that we are working today where a year from now the situation will have changed and we will no longer be able to work. We will have to readjust and pull back.

Mr. CONNOLLY. One of the concerns I had when I went to Afghanistan in 2009 was the emerging—of emergence of CERP as actually sort of a parallel, unregulated, no oversight stream of development assistance, economic assistance funding, entirely controlled by local commanders, our military commanders on the ground.

I think it started out with great intentions, but it ballooned. It became fairly substantial, and it always worried me that it didn't get the attention, say, bilateral aid programs do. It is not really—you know, it is kind of ad hoc projectized. It doesn't get the kind of careful scrutiny and evaluation we would normally expect for any kind of normal aid project.

What is the status of CERP funding? And are the concerns I had in 2009—do you think they have been resolved or addressed in the interim? And I ask that of any one of the three of you.

Mr. SAMPLER. I will hit—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Sure.

Mr. SAMPLER [continuing]. Mike speak to the current status. Your concerns in 2009 were not unfounded. Commander's Emergency Response Program money was to serve as a stabilization goal. And I have been in the military, and I have been at USAID, and I can appreciate the value of what they were attempting to do.

One of the ways that we, with our DoD colleagues, remedied this was by putting senior development advisors at each of the regional combatant commands, and then embedding USAID officers all the way down to the PRT and the district support team level. So from 2007, '08, and '09, to the most recent times, I think we have addressed this. We no longer see CERP programs that don't have a developmental eye cast upon them.

Now, that doesn't always mean that CERP programs are what I would consider good long-term development programs. But that is not their goal. Their goal is to satisfy something that that tactical commander needs at that moment. And we tolerate that; we work with CERP to make sure that it integrates into good development. Even if at the moment it may not be a developmentally sound project, it does serve a military goal.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Ambassador, any comment on that?

Ambassador DOBBINS. Well, obviously, CERP is dramatically reduced as a result of the reduction in—

Mr. CONNOLLY. I am sorry, Mr. Ambassador. Can you—

Ambassador DOBBINS. I am sorry. Obviously, CERP is dramatically reduced as a result of the reduction in U.S. forces. And I would guess as we move to a training, advise, and assist role, that it will be reduced to virtually zero. So whatever the problem was, I think it will be resolved in that sense.

But I do agree with Mr. Sampler that over time AID and Defense created a joint mechanism for managing CERP that brought developmental considerations to bear on those expenditures.

I might just mention, in response to your earlier questions about total levels of spending and casualties, that State and AID between them spend about \$2 billion a year in Afghanistan at the moment. It was about double that 2 years ago.

Casualties, about 21-, 2,200 killed in action since the beginning of the conflict, and about 20,000 injured.

As to the cost of the troops, as I said, it is about \$1 million a day per troop, so we currently have 50,000 troops there. If that was a constant through the year, it would be \$50 million. It will be less than that because we are bringing those troop numbers way down over the next year.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

And I know my time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. We go to Mr. Brad Schneider of Illinois.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I thank the witnesses for your time here, but also critically for the service you give to our country.

I want to repeat what—some of the sentiment that has already been shared—the supreme disappointment in President Karzai's refusal to sign the bilateral security agreement and his game-playing with it at a time—as, Ambassador Dobbins, you have said—time is of the essence here. It has an ongoing impact.

You know, being the last one to ask questions, it is a chance to wrap up. Ambassador Dobbins, you mentioned the war in Afghanistan is not yet over, and I think, Mr. Sampler, you touched on it and said it most eloquently. We either do it right this time or we do it all over again. And the goal, the reason we have invested so much in blood and treasure, is to eliminate a threat, but also long term to make sure that we have a stable government that is working for the prosperity of its people, and justly and regional security, and that is critical.

What struck me listening to the testimony today is that—a common thread that you all touched on. Mr. Sampler, you said that

continued U.S. engagement is critical to Afghanistan's stability and to protecting the vital interests of our own country.

And, Mr. Dumont, I think you put it a little bit differently, but the ANSF can be a guarantor for a secure and democratic Afghanistan, but not without continued progress toward developing a sustainable and professional force. And I think that requires ongoing support.

And, finally, Ambassador Dobbins, all recognize that without continued international, military, and economic support Afghanistan risks falling back into civil war. So it becomes, in some respect, a self-fulfilling prophecy.

As we sit here in December and looking to a new year, we look forward to next summer and the summer fighting season again. So I guess my first question after a long introduction—and, Mr. Dumont, maybe you are the one to look to for this—what do you see as the critical success factors if the ANSF is going to stand up and successfully make it through next summer, and we are going to continue down a path we are hoping to see?

Mr. DUMONT. I think there are several things. One is, obviously, providing for a safe and secure election. They are quite adept at providing a secure environment for voter registration to take place, and there were no significant security interests during that time. And I think that is a good indicator. But their ability to secure the elections will be critical, and what that will do is that will enhance their confidence going forward.

I also think as we drawdown and they realize that there is less coalition presence, how well they continue to take the fight to the insurgency will be key. They have been quite adept at doing it during this fighting season. It has enhanced their confidence tremendously.

What is going to be next for the ANSF is the ability to continue to train and equip their troops themselves, the ability to deploy their people where they need them, the ability to sustain their force based on the resources that they get from both donor nations and their own resources. Those will be the key indicators in the months and years ahead.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Sampler, you know, outside the context of the military—anticipated military challenges next summer, spring with the election, from your standpoint, what is—what are the greatest threats to your ongoing effectiveness in the next 12, 24 months?

Mr. SAMPLER. It is something that was discussed in the hearing yesterday—I haven't heard it discussed today widely—and it is the hedging behavior of Afghans in a current area or a current time of uncertainty and instability. If Afghans have a sense that there is a way forward, and if the elections go well, I think hedging behavior will diminish.

But if Afghans feel that the international community is going to walk away from them and leave them to their devices, then hedging behavior will be things like returning to feudal warlords and ethnic warlords, continuing to salt away resources. It will encourage more corruption, not less corruption. So part of our job at USAID will be to encourage them that USAID's engagement in Afghanistan is not a short-term thing. We engage in countries for

decades if there is a need and if there is support from the U.S. Congress.

Our goal will be to convince the Afghans that we the U.S., and we the international community, are here to stay, so we can minimize the hedging behavior on behalf of the Afghans.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Does that hedging behavior—I mean, I am trying to put it in context, get my own mind around it. Does the hedging behavior lead to a more fractious Afghanistan, pulling it further away from that secure, just, increasingly prosperous Afghanistan? Is that the challenge?

Mr. SAMPLER. Yes. I think hedging behavior is basically where family and clan leaders decide to focus on protecting their own, so they don't make business investments. They don't reach out to other ethnic groups. Their political decisions are going to be very clan-centric and very ethnically centric in a hedging environment.

Whereas, if we can convince them that there is some stability and the opportunity to move forward, they will be more I think outgoing and more entrepreneurial.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Good. Thank you.

Ambassador Dobbins, I had hoped to give you the final word, but I ran out of time. So I apologize. But, again, thank you very much. I yield back.

Ambassador DOBBINS. Thank you, sir.

Chairman ROYCE. Well, thank you. Mr. Schneider, thank you very much for yielding back. We thank our members. We thank also the witnesses for being before us today.

As we saw in Afghanistan early this morning, another car bomb exploded, this one outside the northern gate of the Kabul International Airport, and the Taliban claimed responsibility for this attack. Those carrying out the attacks had ties to the Haqqani network.

In terms of the amount spent per month in Afghanistan, it is about \$6.7 billion by the United States. This committee has oversight over this issue.

I want to, again, thank the witnesses for their testimony today. But, as you know, there were a number of questions asked by committee members. If you can get back to those members with written answers to anything not answered today, and there will be some additional questions forthcoming from members of the committee.

Thank you again for your testimony, and we stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:04 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

**FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128**

Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman

December 11, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at <http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov>):

DATE: Wednesday, December 11, 2013

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: Afghanistan 2014: Year of Transition

WITNESSES: The Honorable James F. Dobbins
Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan
U.S. Department of State

Mr. Donald L. Sampler
Assistant to the Administrator
Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs
U.S. Agency for International Development

Mr. Michael J. Dumont
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Afghanistan, Pakistan, & Central Asia
U.S. Department of Defense

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.



COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day Wednesday Date 12/11/13 Room 2172

Starting Time 10:00 A.M. Ending Time 12:04 P.M.

Recesses 0 (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Rep. Edward R. Royce, Chairman

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☒

Executive (closed) Session ☐

Televised ☒

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☒

Stenographic Record ☒

TITLE OF HEARING:

Afghanistan 2014: Year of Transition

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

See Attendance Sheet.

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

None.

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☒ No ☐

(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

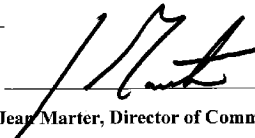
STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record.)

IFR - Royce

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____

or

TIME ADJOURNED 12:04 P.M.


Jean Marter, Director of Committee Operations

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Full Committee Hearing

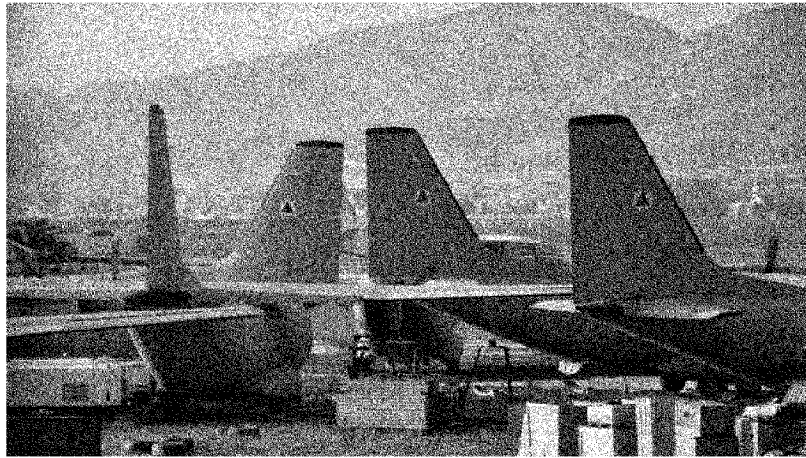
<i>Present</i>	<i>Member</i>
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
X	Christopher H. Smith, NJ
X	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
X	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
X	Steve Chabot, OH
X	Joe Wilson, SC
	Michael T. McCaul, TX
X	Ted Poe, TX
X	Matt Salmon, AZ
	Tom Marino, PA
X	Jeff Duncan, SC
X	Adam Kinzinger, IL
X	Mo Brooks, AL
X	Tom Cotton, AR
X	Paul Cook, CA
X	George Holding, NC
X	Randy K. Weber, Sr., TX
X	Scott Perry, PA
	Steve Stockman, TX
X	Ron DeSantis, FL
	Trey Radcl, FL
	Doug Collins, GA
X	Mark Meadows, NC
X	Ted S. Yoho, FL
	Luke Messer, IN

<i>Present</i>	<i>Member</i>
X	Eliot L. Engel, NY
	Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, AS
	Brad Sherman, CA
	Gregory W. Meeks, NY
X	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
X	Theodore E. Deutch, FL
	Brian Higgins, NY
	Karen Bass, CA
	William Keating, MA
	David Cicilline, RI
	Alan Grayson, FL
	Juan Vargas, CA
X	Bradley S. Schneider, IL
X	Joseph P. Kennedy III, MA
X	Ami Bera, CA
	Alan S. Lowenthal, CA
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X	Lois Frankel, FL
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Planes Parked in Weeds in Kabul After \$486 Million Spent

By Tony Capaccio Dec 9, 2013 11:00 PM ET



Photographer: Gopal Ratnam/Bloomberg

The failed transport planes add to billions of dollars of wasted U.S. tax dollars... [Read More](#)

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- [Sopko Letter on G222](#)

Sixteen broken-down transport planes that cost U.S. taxpayers at least \$486 million are languishing among the weeds, wooden cargo boxes and old tires at Kabul International Airport, waiting to be destroyed without ever being delivered to the Afghan Air Force.

The special inspector general for Afghanistan is investigating why the refurbished [G222 turboprop](#) aircraft from [Finmeccanica SpA's](#) Alenia Aermacchi North America unit no longer can be flown after logging only 200 of 4,500 hours of U.S.-led training flights and missions required from January to September 2012 under a U.S. Air Force contract because of persistent maintenance issues.

The unused transport planes are in addition to the billions of dollars in wasted U.S. funds documented by the inspector general's office since American troops entered Afghanistan after

the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. They also compound the doubts about the Afghan Air Force's capability to operate independently after U.S. forces withdraw by the end of next year.

"We need answers to this huge waste of U.S. taxpayer money," John Sopko, the special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction, said in an e-mailed statement. "Who made the decision to purchase these planes, and why? We need to get to the bottom of this, and that's why we're opening this inquiry."

Asked about the planes after they were photographed at the airport in Afghanistan by a Bloomberg News reporter, Sopko said he also saw them "sitting in the weeds" during a recent visit.

The G222 transports refurbished by the unit of Rome-based Finmeccanica were supposed to make up about 15 percent of the 105-aircraft Afghan Air Force, flying top Afghan civilian officials and combat troops and conducting medical evacuations.

Alenia 'Struggled'

Instead, six of the planes already have been cannibalized for spare parts, a separate audit by the Pentagon inspector general found. In addition to the 16 planes in Kabul, there are four in Germany.

The U.S. Air Force didn't renew Alenia Aermacchi's maintenance contract in March because it "struggled to consistently meet contractual requirements," Ed Gulick, a spokesman for the service, said in an e-mailed statement.

"Faced with long-standing and well-known issues with the program, Alenia did take action to improve their performance in some areas, but the Air Force was not convinced Alenia could meet and sustain all contractual obligations," Gulick said.

Alenia spokesman Dan Hill said the company "is proud of its work" on the transports.

"At the time that the U.S. Air Force chose not to renew the contract," the aircraft "were successfully performing missions in Afghanistan and exceeding the program objectives. While disappointed, we respect their decision not to continue," he said in an e-mailed statement.

Averting a Repeat

Sopko's investigation will review the decision to select the Alenia aircraft, determine the total spent to buy, sustain, and dispose of them and evaluate what procedures are in place to prevent similar failures with other purchases for the Afghan Air Force.

The inquiry was prompted by "the need to ensure that the U.S. government does not repeat the mistakes made throughout this nearly half-billion dollar program," Sopko said in a Dec. 5 letter to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel.

Navy Commander [Elissa Smith](#), a Pentagon spokeswoman, said in an e-mail that the G222 aircraft's failings have "had no impact on the readiness of the Afghan Air Force" because it has been operating 26 Cessna Aircraft Co. 208 Caravan planes "exceedingly well during the last several years and has been able to compensate."

'Hotter, Dustier'

The G222s eventually are to be replaced by C-130H transports from [Lockheed Martin Corp.](#) that the Pentagon says won't begin operating until 2016. The C-130H "will provide better range, as well as passenger and cargo movement" than the G222, Smith said.

U.S. training for the Afghan Air Force to fly the new planes may be affected by the fate of an agreement for some U.S. and allied forces to remain after 2014. Afghan President [Hamid Karzai](#) has balked at U.S. calls for him to sign that accord quickly.

The U.S. Air Force views the G222 as a "lesson-learned" case, said Lieutenant General [Charles Davis](#), the service's top military acquisition official,

"Just about everything you can think of was wrong for it other than the airplane was built for the size of cargo and mission they needed," Davis said in an interview. "Other than that, it didn't really meet any of the requirements."

Once the planes were in Afghanistan it became clear that they were flying in a "hotter, dustier" environment than they could handle, he said.

No Buyers

"It was contractor performance," it was difficulty finding capable pilots, "it was a very unsustainable airframe," he said. "It was about everything you could think of that went into this."

By the time President [Barack Obama](#) started to draw down forces in Afghanistan, training officials with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization decided that "these airplanes are never going to meet the needs of the Afghan Air Force, so we need to get rid of them," Davis said.

"We looked for buyers, people to accept those, and nobody was interested in trying to maintain an airplane that was no longer sustainable, so that's why" these aircraft "are sitting on the ramp and not going to fly," Davis said.

Davis said he expected that at some point the G222s will be stripped of military gear "and destroyed and moved out of the country."

In its Jan. 31 report marked "For Official Use Only," the Pentagon inspector general said the NATO and U.S. training commands "have not effectively managed the program."

In biannual reports to Congress on the status of the Afghan military, the Pentagon initially highlighted the aircraft as key to building the Afghan Air Force and then minimized its troubles.

A report in July said without elaboration that the G222 transport “has been removed from service.”

To contact the reporter on this story: Tony Capaccio in Washington at acapaccio@bloomberg.net

To contact the editor responsible for this story: John Walcott at jwalcott9@bloomberg.net



Questions for the Record
Submitted by Chairman Ed Royce
To the Honorable James Dobbins

Question 1:

What are the FY 2015, FY 2016, and FY 2017 goals for the civilian U.S. Mission to Afghanistan as laid out in the Mission Strategic Resource Plan (or related documents such as Mission Resource Request or the Integrated Country Strategy) or other Department of State planning documents? How will the Department adapt these goals to what is achievable under the force level the President determines?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]

Question 2:

What lessons has the Department of State learned from its rightsizing effort in Iraq after the 2011 U.S. military withdrawal from that country? How is the Department applying these lessons in Afghanistan to ensure the U.S. Mission to Afghanistan is appropriately sized to its tasks?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]

Question 3:

If 12,000 U.S. troops remain, how many total personnel would you plan to have under Chief of Mission authority? Where in Afghanistan would they be stationed? How many would be U.S. direct hires? How many would be locally-engaged staff? How many would be contractors? How many would be security personnel? How many would provide so-called life support functions, such as lodging, dining, laundry, medical services, etc.?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]

Question 4:

If the BSA is not concluded and all U.S. forces are withdrawn, how many total personnel would you plan to have under Chief of Mission authority? Where in Afghanistan would they be stationed? How many would be U.S. direct hires? How many would be locally-engaged staff? How many would be contractors? How many would be security personnel? How many would provide so-called life support functions, such as lodging, dining, laundry, medical services, etc.?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]

Question 5:

Once the chancery expansion and additional permanent housing at Embassy Kabul are complete, how many Chief of Mission (COM) personnel total will the Embassy be able to

accommodate? If the Department decides to reduce the number of COM personnel, how will it modify the construction or use of these buildings?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]

Question 6:

Does the Department of State have confidence in the ability of Aegis Defense Services LLC, the current private security contractor at Embassy Kabul, to implement its contractual duties? Is the Department aware of Aegis' staffing shortages at Embassy Kabul? Have these shortages left the embassy less able to adequately respond to an attack?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]

Question 7:

In a recent *USA Today* op-ed, Under Secretary of State for Management Patrick Kennedy stated that, as a result of "important improvements to the SIV application process," nearly "1600 Afghans and their family members received Special Immigrant Visas." What specifically were the "improvements" made to the application process?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]

Question 8:

How many Afghans total have sought SIV status? How many have received COM approval? How many petitions has DHS approved? How many SIVs has the Department issued? How many of these visas have gone to principal applicants and how many to family members?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]

Question 9:

What is the Government of Afghanistan's view of the Afghan SIV program? Is the Afghan SIV program addressed in the pending Bilateral Security Agreement between our two governments?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]



Questions for the Record

*Submitted by the Honorable William R. Keating
To the Honorable James Dobbins*

Question 1:

Ambassador Dobbins, I am particularly concerned about the future of Afghan-Pakistani relations throughout the next year and beyond. Pakistan's cooperation is not only necessary but essential for a successful U.S. military drawdown, political reconciliation, and long-term stability in Afghanistan. Last year, a "Peace Process Roadmap to 2015" released by the Afghan High Peace Council envisioned a central role for Pakistan and the eventual granting of governance positions to Taliban figures. Can you discuss the status and impact of this plan?

I am also extremely concerned by the persistent smuggling of ammonium nitrate fertilizer, the main explosive found in the improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that are increasingly being used against our troops in Afghanistan. As you know, this compound originates from two key locations in Pakistan, and, while seizures of ammonium nitrate fertilizer more than doubled in 2012 compared with 2011, reports also indicate that Taliban bombs made with this explosive are reaching record levels.

I am wondering if any of our witnesses today can speak to the preparations by the Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Working Group for stepping up efforts to further restrict and monitor the cross-border transport of illegal ammonium nitrate shipments from Pakistan into Afghanistan as we look forward to diminished troop presence in Afghanistan? And, can you elaborate on additional efforts to protect supply lines out of the Afghanistan and Pakistan and touch on the challenges that may remain when protection is left to Afghan-led security? How is the Bilateral Security Agreement taking these issues into consideration?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]



Questions for the Record

*Submitted by the Honorable William R. Keating
To Special Assistant Sampler*

Question:

Special Assistant Sampler, as a former prosecutor and District Attorney, I strongly believe that full integration of women in civic engagement and electoral participation should be a pillar of both a counterterrorism and rebuilding strategy. The promotion of women's education and civic engagement should be at the forefront of much of what we do in fragile and transitioning states. Social and legal institutions still do not guarantee women equality in basic legal and human rights. Further, laws against domestic violence are often not enforced on behalf of women. I am very pleased to hear you speak of USAID's efforts to target the promotion, education, and training of a new generation of Afghan women.

What steps are we taking to ensure that the efforts and progress we have made through training and educational initiatives and leadership programs will sustain through the transition to Afghan-led governance? How will the Bilateral Security Agreement make certain that these efforts – and the women and girls that they serve – are protected?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]



Questions for the Record

*Submitted by the Honorable Joseph Kennedy
To the Honorable James Dobbins*

Question 1:

During the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States employed thousands of Iraqi and Afghan nationals as translators, drivers and cooks. As a result of their work for and on behalf of the U.S., these individuals and their families continue to face retribution and death threats in their home countries. Thus, in 2008, under the National Defense Authority Act, Congress created 25,000 visas for Iraqis who worked with the U.S. government for at least a year. Congress created another 8,750 visas under the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 for Afghans who similarly worked with the U.S. government.

However, despite the ongoing violence and threats to personal safety that beleaguer the Iraqis and Afghans who aided the United States, the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) programs have been wrought with delays. It is my understanding that Secretary Kerry has formed a new taskforce to assess and investigate the Special Immigrant Visa programs. Can you please provide an update on that taskforce's work, intended purpose, and findings?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]

Question 2:

Additionally, what is the average processing time for an application, from the moment an applicant submits a visa application until the moment the applicant is denied or receives a visa?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]

Question 3:

It is my understanding that 5,500 of the 25,000 Iraqi SIVs and 1,051 of the 8,500 Afghan SIVs have been issued. Can you provide updated information on the number of visas issued, the number of visas denied, and the number of visas that are documentarily complete but remain in a backlog?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]

Question 4:

The process for applying for and being awarded a visa can seem daunting and overly complicated. Could you please provide a description of each step in the process and the average length of time each step takes?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]

Question 5:

Eligible individuals for the SIV programs are those who worked for or on behalf of the U.S. for at least a year and who have experienced or are experiencing an “ongoing serious threat.” Could you provide an explanation of how the Department determines what rises to the level of an “ongoing serious threat”?

[RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED AT TIME OF PRINTING]